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VOLUME 35
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The Left and the 1984 Elections

THE EDITORS

The Future of Nuclear Power

JAY M. GOULD

Belize—On the Rim of the Cauldron

DAVE BROAD

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EDITORS: Paul M. Sweezy Harry Magdoff Leo Huberman (1903-1968)

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

A measure of the high quality and serious commitment of MR's readership (which we estimate to be four or five times larger than the magazine's actual circulation of roughly 10,000) is the large flow of correspondence from readers to editors. This correspondence ranges from criticisms (and appreciations) of material appearing in MR, through suggestions for projects to be undertaken, to inquiries about a wide range of topics (questions of Marxian theory and bibliography, what colleges and universities offer useful programs in political economy, etc.). From this correspondence we choose a small percentage for publication (much smaller than we would like); we give serious consideration to proposals (unfortunately lacking the resources to undertake most); and we try to respond personally to inquiries (severely limited in this respect by shortage of time, lack of secretarial help, etc.) To those who feel, doubtless justifiably in many cases, neglected or frustrated we offer apologies and ask them not to be deterred from writing in the future. Next time we may be able to do better.

(Continued on inside back cover)

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THE LEFT AND THE 1984 ELECTIONS

In an interview with James Reston (*New York Times,* November 1, 1983), Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. is reported as saying of President Ronald Reagan:

> He only works three to three and a half hours a day. He doesn't do his homework. He doesn't read his briefing papers. He lacks the knowledge he should [have] on every sphere, whether it's the domestic or whether it's the international sphere. . . . He's hurt 70 million people out there. He's hurt so many people.

Stop a minute and think what this means. The president of the United States of America, the most powerful man in the world who by the very nature of the office he holds has his finger on the button that could blow up the world, is ignorant, incompetent, and cruel. For people everywhere this is an intolerable situation, and for Americans who love their country and yearn for it to play an honorable role in the world it is a source of frustration and shame.

This, we submit, is enough to define the overriding issue in the 1984 elections. Ronald Reagan must go.

But the question whether or not the Reagan administration continues in office of course goes far beyond the person of the president. What we have is in every respect the most reactionary, right-wing government in the country's history, and in many ways it is doing the things that in other countries and at other times are done by fascist governments. This is particularly true in the area of military and foreign policy. But it also applies to redistribution of income from poor to rich; slashing social

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services; undermining legislative and administrative protections for women, minorities, and the environment; attacking trade unions; and mounting a general offensive against civil liberties. The record is consistent throughout; and all indications are that if Reagan is reelected, present tendencies and trends will continue and likely be intensified. A specific danger is that the next four years would see enough new Reagan appointments to the Supreme Court to ensure a solid reactionary majority until the end of the century.

We are not saying or implying that the Reagan administration is actually fascist. The ruling class in every developed capitalist country is divided into centrist and right-wing factions. In "normal" times, i.e., when capital accumulation is proceeding relatively smoothly, the two find it mutually advantageous to cooperate within a bourgeois democratic framework. In times of crisis, however, the right-wing faction grows relatively stronger and the democratic framework is subjected to increasing strains. Where for historical reasons this framework is weak, it may break down and be replaced by an openly authoritarian regime that can properly be characterized as fascist. But if the bourgeois democratic framework has deep historical roots, as in Britain and the United States, it may be able to accommodate a move to the right resulting in a situation which is the functional equivalent of fascism. The difference, however, is fundamental since where no breach in institutional continuity has taken place, the road back to the normal operation of bourgeois democracy is still open. The 1984 elections present the United States with an opportunity to start this return journey from the Reaganite functional equivalent of fascism to normal bourgeois democracy. (A situation similar in some respects existed in the second Nixon administration, with the major difference that Nixon blundered into his own downfall.)

If from a left perspective all this is obvious, so also is the logical conclusion to which it points: the most effective anti-Reagan vote is a vote for the Democratic candidate whoever it may be. But clearly the left is not going to sit on its collective hands doing nothing from now to November. What is to be done in the meantime?

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There is no simple answer to this question, and it is both inevitable and healthy that there should be differences of opinion and important that they should be thought out and debated. What follows is an attempt to contribute to such a discussion.

The left in this country has no mass base and hence no significant influence on public opinion. Worse still, its weakness is such that it can be misrepresented and scapegoated by politicians and the media without being able to strike back in any effective way. As long as this situation exists, it makes little sense to talk about left politics in the United States. And by the same token a left priority has to be to change the situation, to get a foothold in public opinion and to work to expand it into a meaningful base of political operations. How can this objective best be promoted?

To begin with, past experience shows that getting involved in the process of choosing the "best" Democratic candidate to oppose Reagan is a dead end. Whoever has the mandate of the Democratic Party will be first and foremost a representative of American capitalism and imperialism, and as such does not deserve the support of anyone on the left. True, defeating Reagan is important. His policies have already proved disastrous, and their continuation could only bring worse. But it is in the interests of the Democratic Party to defeat him and not our business to tell them how to do it. We will vote for whomever they put up in order to get rid of Reagan, but we only compromise our principles and injure our credibility if we espouse the cause of a particular Democratic candidate.

This is a very important point. The U.S. economy is a shambles, only thinly disguised by a purely cyclical upswing of doubtful strength and uncertain duration. All the elements of a new crisis in both the domestic and the international spheres are present and rapidly maturing. Are we to make fools of ourselves by arguing that a Mondale or a Glenn (or any other Democratic hopeful) is equipped to cope with the storm when it comes? We may believe, or hope, that all of them, including whichever one is chosen to run, are less likely to react in a dangerous and destructive way than Reagan. But isn't it our responsibility to insist that all of them are prisoners of the very system that

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creates these crises? And what basis could any of us have for trying to persuade people that one or another of them would perform better than the others in a crunch?

How about the Jesse Jackson candidacy, we shall be asked? Is that to be rated on a par with all the others? No, definitely not. The reason as we see it, however, is that the Jackson candidacy is not like all the others. Whatever Jackson and those supporting him may think, he is not really a possible presidential candidate, and from a left perspective this is precisely the strength of his campaign. He is acting in ways, saying things, raising issues which no one acceptable to the Democratic Party could do. The Democrats cannot exclude him altogether because it would alienate masses of blacks who are essential to the Democratic Party's success. Jackson is of course not a man of the left, but much of what he is doing is objectively far to the left of the accepted norms of the U.S. political establishment, and by following this course—which he is able to do because he has a real constituency behind him—Jackson is stirring things up, breaking molds, making people think new thoughts in a way that the left has never been able to do, but which it *must* sooner or later succeed in doing if it is ever to break out of its present quarantine.

This is the reason why we can say, again speaking objectively, that Jackson is performing a function of great importance to the left and one we should gratefully reciprocate by giving wholehearted support to his campaign. At the same time we should be aware that a by-product of this campaign, possibly of decisive importance to the outcome of the presidential election itself, can and should be a vast increase in the number of blacks and other minorities registered to vote.

When it comes to congressional, state, and local elections, the problems faced by the left are obviously more numerous and more complicated. Specific situations vary enormously, and it seems to us that only one generally valid guideline applies: never lose sight of the central objective, which is to establish a meaningful left presence on the U.S. political scene. And this in turn implies an obligation to use every opportunity to raise basic

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issues and to criticize populist/reformist illusions in a constructive way.

This is not a recipe for a futile exercise in revolutionary purism. People in this society are subjected to an infinite variety of abuses and injustices—as workers, consumers, and citizens. These must be struggled against, often in the electoral arena. There are politicians who side with the people's struggles and those who side with the people's enemies. It is not always easy, or even possible, to tell the difference (political discourse is as often meant to deceive as to enlighten), but the principle is clear that the left has the responsibility to identify and support politicians who are on the side of the people. This, put in its simplest terms, is what electoral contests involving left participation is all about. We back candidates who sincerely reject U.S. interventionist policies abroad and the huge military budget at home; who favor social security, low-cost housing, better medical care, safety in the workplace, consumer protection, etc.; and we oppose those on the other side. At the same time we have to warn that there are narrow limits to what can be accomplished so long as we live in a society dominated by production for profit.

We do not disparage or underestimate the importance of struggles within the framework of the present society: if they are neglected, as the Reagan experience so convincingly shows, the result is regression and repression. But we do not harbor the illusions of those who believe that the rampant evils of capitalism can be overcome without abolishing the system that gives rise to them. And we are convinced that an effective left in this country will emerge only when a significant (and growing) segment of the American people is ready to go beyond essentially defensive struggles to challenge the capitalist system itself. For us on the left the struggle must proceed on two levels, and to neglect either is a clear abdication of responsibility.

Though often overlooked in theory and violated in practice, this principle has been a fundamental tenet of the modern socialist movement ever since it was first clearly formulated in the *Communist Manifesto*. "The communists," Marx and Engels wrote, "fight for the immediate aims, for the enforce-

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ment of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

The year 1984—despite its pessimistic Orwellian overtones—should offer many openings and opportunities for carrying the struggle forward on both levels. If they are properly understood and vigorously followed up, 1984 could be a real turning point.

(January 15, 1984)

Elections are nothing but a thermometer for the ruling class to gauge the people's level of awareness.

—Carlos Marighella

The two biggest obstacles to democracy in the United States are, first, the widespread delusion among the poor that we have a democracy, and second, the chronic terror among the rich lest we get it.

—James H. McGill, Chairman of the Board,
McGill Manufacturing Company, Inc., Valparaiso, Indiana

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THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR POWER

BY JAY M. GOULD

Economic forecasts can generally at best merely emphasize significant tendencies. Attempts to account for turning points or other specifics, even (or perhaps especially) when they emerge from computer models, are usually foolhardy endeavors. But the future decline of nuclear power, which is projected here, is supported by evidence that peak levels have been reached in the past, and that the next 15 years will witness an inexorable working out of a chain of dismal events embodied in three decades of massive commitments to a flawed technology.

That nuclear power can no longer be regarded as an economically viable alternative to other energy sources can be inferred from the low ratings assigned by Wall Street to nuclear power stocks and bonds. There are a handful of nuclear-free utilities (e.g., Allegheny Power, Utah Power and Light, Potomac Electric) whose stocks have hit all-time highs, while the defaulted bonds of the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) now sell for 20¢ on the dollar, with an implied loss of $2 billion to credulous investors.

A recent *Forbes* article entitled "Utilities: Are the Good Times Over?" (December 5, 1983) features a ranking of utilities with respect to their "quality of earnings" as rated by the investment house of Salomon Brothers. An average rating of B or better was given to a dozen companies whose construction plans for 1983-85 included no nuclear reactors and whose con-

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struction budgets constituted less than 25 percent of total capitalization. At the other extreme there were a dozen companies with nuclear reactors in construction and whose construction budgets exceeded 50 percent of their capitalization, whose average rating was below C–.

Nuclear utilities require careful analysis of the quality of earnings because they have continued to make high dividend payments despite poor earnings. Moreover, such dividends are often permitted to qualify as a return on capital in order to attract investors. Even so they are relatively poor investments. Consider for example the case of Commonwealth Edison, which with 15 reactors in operation or under construction is the most heavily nuclear of all investor-owned utilities. A recent study shows that $1,000 invested in Commonwealth stock in 1974 would show no gain by 1982, but that over the eight years an average dividend payment was made of 11 percent. A similar investment in the top dozen nuclear utilities would have brought a total return of .124 percent over the eight years, while an investment in a representative group of eight non-nuclear utilities would have brought a total return of 269 percent.[1]

The bleak prospects for nuclear power today stand in sharp contrast to the euphoria of the "Atoms for Peace" program launched by the Eisenhower administration, with its promise of energy too cheap to be metered. A new book by Mark Hertsgaard (*Nuclear, Inc.: The Men and Money Behind Nuclear Energy,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1983) traces the current crisis of civilian nuclear power to its origins in the postwar nuclear-based U.S. national defense policy. Under conditions of wartime secrecy, huge public and private sums were invested, particularly in the 1950-70 decades, in accelerating the design of an American nuclear reactor that would dominate the non-socialist world. In this period the rated capacity of successive reactor designs rose 50-fold without any operational experience to validate such rapid expansion. As we now know, in the process the safety requirements of a new and dangerous technology were badly served.

The economic death of the nuclear power industry has been definitively foreshadowed in the work of Charles Koman-

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off, an economist who has demonstrated that the capital costs and operating expenses of nuclear power plants do now, and will increasingly, exceed the corresponding costs of building and operating pollution-free coal-fired plants.[2]

Komanoff's data base contains detailed cost breakdowns for all U.S. nuclear and coal-fired plants now in operation and in construction and indicates that the marked escalation of nuclear costs is due to continuing engineering breakdowns, which in turn reflect the many unresolved safety issues that plague nuclear plant design. This accords with the judgment of David Lilienthal, cited by Hertsgaard, that "a new, different and safer alternative reactor design can hardly be available in less than fifteen years."

Komanoff's data base enables us to quantify the economic consequences of several scenarios. The worst case contingency is that of a core melt-down accident of the kind so narrowly averted at Three Mile Island, an occurrence which some industry observers believe to have a 50 percent probability over the next decade.[3]

Hertsgaard reports general agreement even among members of the elite corps of nuclear executives in government and private industry that such a disaster would result in an immediate shutdown of every nuclear plant, wholly aside from the immediate direct damage estimated by the AEC to be on the average in excess of $7 billion.[4]

A more hopeful scenario is one in which there would be a gradual premature phasing out of the 73 operating reactors over the next two decades as the result of an increasing number of shutdowns required by the costs of increasingly stringent safety regulations. Problems would multiply as the reactors encounter new and unforseen problems of corrosion and embrittlement in the later stages of their 25-year lifespan. In this scenario most of the reactors now in construction would never go into operation.

According to Komanoff, there are some 85 reactors now in various stages of construction, totaling 90,000 megawatts in capacity, whose average capital cost will be on the order of $1,500 per KWH in 1979 prices. If the decision to stop con-

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struction came at the point where they were, on the average, roughly half completed, the loss to the utilities would be about $68 billion, far greater than the $47 billion cost of building the reactors now in operation, with a total capacity of 55,000 megawatts. The key to these estimates lies in the escalation of capital costs per KWH, from under $500 for reactors built prior to 1970 to well over $800 for reactors built later.

The later estimates make allowance for some $8 billion for the cost of decommissioning operating reactors, estimated at $138 per KWH. At the end of a reactor's useful life the irradiated fuel must be removed and the reactor closed down for 10 to 30 years before it is safe to dismantle. So far, attempts to disassemble dead reactors have proved to be prohibitively expensive, so it is probable that in the future all dead reactors, along with the accumulated low-level waste, will be permanently interred as modern day pyramids, the construction of which by the turn of the century will constitute a high-growth activity.

There are, of course, very heavy additional future costs for the ultimate removal, transportation, and permanent burial of the intensely radioactive used fuel assemblies, now being temporarily stored in on-site pools. These costs cannot be estimated, for we do not yet know how or where such a nuclear cemetery will be built.

Setting these costs aside for the moment as a federal responsibility that cannot by law be charged to the utility industry, we are left with an estimated possible capital loss to private utilities of between $50 and $100 billion, depending on just when nuclear reactors are deemed too expensive or too dangerous to operate. The bulk of this loss will be associated with reactors now in construction. How should such losses be allocated?

Shoreham illustrates the disastrous consequences of passing these costs on directly to the local ratepayers. According to Governor Cuomo's Special Commission, Shoreham's $3.5 billion capital costs would bankrupt LILCO, even if the full costs were passed on to local ratepayers, for the resulting doubling of the rate structure would turn Long Island into an economic wasteland. LILCO would lose all claim to enjoying the economies of scale that warrant regulatory protection.

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One can speculate that if the Shoreham costs were to be passed on to local ratepayers, Long Island could become the first area in the country to demonstrate the competitive viability of cogeneration units which convert natural gas into electricity, windmills, and other solar technologies. Photovoltaic cells are expected to become competitive with high-cost centralized power systems within the next decade. In this connection it is interesting to note how much photovoltaic research is now supported by the far-sighted oil companies which are getting out of uranium and other nuclear enterprises, after having heavily invested in coal mines.

It seems that the private utilities with nuclear "white elephants" now in construction would be better advised to adopt Hertsgaard's thesis, i.e., that they were drawn into this mess for reasons of state and are therefore justified in demanding some kind of federal compensation.

Any attempt to project the grim prospects for nuclear power must take into consideration the gigantic, long-deferred problems (mentioned above) of the transportation and disposal of high-level nuclear waste. This is the subject of a truly harrowing study by Marvin Resnikoff entitled *The Next Nuclear Gamble: Transportation and Storage of Nuclear Waste*, published by the Council on Economic Priorities, New York, 1983. The problem centers around the storage and disposal of the irradiated fuel assemblies—the end product of the fission process. A typical pressurized light water reactor uses 60 fuel assemblies, or 30 tons of fuel each year. Backlogs of irradiated fuel assemblies are being temporarily stored in pools of water at the 73 commercial nuclear plants, many of which are now nearing full capacity. Temporary national storage sites have been tentatively authorized, most likely at Savannah River, S.C., or Idaho Falls, Idaho, where federal military nuclear operations have generated huge stockpiles of nuclear waste.

Presently about 360,000 metric tons of commercial and military high-level nuclear waste have been accumulated at some 100 locations, which must be moved to an off-site burial ground. Under the terms of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, signed by Reagan in January 1983, the Energy Department will by 1985

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pick three of nine potential sites in the states of Utah, Washington, Nevada, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Anticipating furious state-wide opposition, the act provides for a final selection by 1998, after both houses of Congress have had the time to override a state governor's veto.

Resnikoff estimates that when the away-from-reactor-storage sites are ready to operate, the number of such shipments by highway will increase 100-fold in a 15 year period, resulting in 4 nuclear transport accidents per year in the 1990s, and as many as 17 accidents per year by the turn of the century. The implications of so high a nuclear accident rate are truly staggering. Such scientists as John Gofman, Arthur Tamplin, and Ernest Sternglass (all former members of the nuclear priesthood), have demonstrated that low-level radiation from the fallout from nuclear bomb testing and emissions from reactor accidents have caused and will cause countless numbers of deaths.[5]

Sternglass has been able to measure the sharp gains in fetal deaths and infant mortality in those areas heavily subjected to windborne and radioactive fallout, extending even to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of surviving babies 18 years later! He greatly embarrassed the Pennsylvania Health Department by correctly predicting the rise in infant mortality in those counties affected by fallout from the Three Mile Island accident. His linkage of the otherwise inexplicable sharp drop in the 1977-78 SAT scores to fallout from the peak levels of bomb testing in the late 1950s was confirmed in a study in 1980 commissioned by the U.S. Navy, worried that its increasingly complex weapons technology was outstripping the abilities of new recruits to manage it.[6]

In his chilling book *Secret Fallout,* Sternglass describes the enormous difficulties he encountered in securing the technical data on emissions from utility and state health officials, even when the reactor accidents themselves could not be concealed. Consider then the impact on the public health (and the public) when the nuclear transport fallout projected from the Resnikoff study is added to reactor emissions over the next 15 years!

It seems clear that the confluence of Wall Street's negative verdict and the underlying public opposition to the dangers

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posed by nuclear power will make for great changes in the future structure of the public utility industry in the United States.

As the companies operating hopelessly unviable reactors such as those at Three Mile Island, Shoreham, Seabrook, and so on, are forced to levy disasterously high power rates and consequently approach bankruptcy, they will probably be nationalized and possibly merged into the government-owned TVA power system. Those who associate TVA with its New Deal origins when TVA served as a yardstick by which to measure the gap between the costs of public and private power should withhold their cheers. TVA, with 18 reactors having a total capacity of 21,000 megawatts in operation or under construction, is even more heavily committed to nuclear power than Commonwealth Edison, and its rates are advancing correspondingly. TVA has played a sorry role in recent power history, and its early overcommitment to nuclear power is alleged to have helped stampede investor-owned utilities into similar overcommitments.

Nationalization of nuclear power would represent a sharp break with the American tradition of extending large public subsidies to sick major companies, and would be akin to the "lemon nationalism" more characteristic of Western European practice. But it would be a candid acknowledgment that so-called national security considerations outrank economic and public health concerns. Unfortunately most other countries caught in the nuclear trap would fall back on the same rationalization—including France, which hopes some day to achieve 70 percent of its energy needs from nuclear power. And yet in the United States with all the massive investments reviewed here and the dangers to which we are and will be exposed, nuclear energy still ranks on a par with wood-burning, so disappointing has its actual net energy contribution been. Our reliance on nuclear power, as on nuclear weapons, may eventually be seen, if there are any of us left to see, as one of the greatest blunders in human history.

NOTES

1. The non-nuclear utilities are Hawaiian Electric, Idaho Power, Magma Power, Tucson Electric Power, Utah Light and Power, CP National, Citizens Utilities, and Sierra Pacific. See Richard P. Lowry, "Is the

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Peaceful Atom a Good Investment?" *Goodmoney Newsletter,* Montpelier, Vt., 1983.

2. Charles Komanoff, *Power Cost Escalation: Nuclear and Coal Capital Costs, Regulation, and Economics* (New York: Komanoff Energy Associates, 1981). Komanoff did much of his work for the Council on Economic Priorities, a New York nonprofit research group that has pioneered in the study of the problems of the nuclear power industry.
3. Daniel Ford, *Cult of the Atom: The Secret Papers of the Atomic Energy Commission* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 238. This is Ford's interpretation of a report entitled "Implications for Reactor Safety of the Accident at Three Mile Island," by David Okrent and Dale Moeller, members of a NRC Advisory Committee on reactor safeguards. This report concluded that "it appears to be difficult to demonstrate with a high degree of confidence that the frequency of a severe core damage or core melt for reactors in operation or under construction is less than one in a thousand to one in two thousand per (reactor) year."
4. A July 1982 NRC report on the possible effects of a major core accident at Indian Point, close to New York, came up with the astonishing estimate that economic losses could under some circumstances exceed $100 billion! (Ford, *Cult of the Atom*), p. 239.
5. John H. Gofman and Arthur R. Tamplin, *Population Control Through Nuclear Pollution* (New York: Nelson-Hall, 1970) and *Poisoned Power* (Emmons, PA: Rodale Press, 1971).
6. Ernest Sternglass, *Secret Fallout: Low Level Radiation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980). The Navy study was conducted by Bernard Rimland and Gerald Larsen and published as "Manpower Quality Decline: An Ecological Perspective," in the Fall 1981 issue of *Armed Forces and Society*. They noted that "the state having the largest drop in scores from children born during the two-year period 1956-58 was Utah, a fact which is consistent with Utah's proximity to the Nevada Test Site and the general northeastern motion of the fallout clouds produced by the Nevada tests, providing very convincing and disquieting evidence closely linking the SAT score decline to the cumulative effects of nuclear fallout."

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TOWARD THE DEMOCRATIC OPENING IN LATIN AMERICA: THE CASE OF BRAZIL

BY RONALD H. CHILCOTE

Dictatorship, authoritarianism, corporatism, fascism, and repression characterize much of the past and present history of Latin America. Reinforcing these tendencies has been the hegemony of domestic ruling classes in league with U.S. policymakers and multinational corporations. Over the years the involvement of the United States in Latin American affairs has assumed several forms of intervention: overt, including hundreds of incidents of direct attack by military force—before Grenada most notably the invasion by 25,000 U.S. marines of the Dominican Republic in 1965; covert, including the CIA organization of the 1954 coup in Guatemala, in Chile during the early 1970s, and current destabilization activities along the Nicaraguan border; and corporate, including efforts by ITT to depose Salvador Allende in 1970 and thereafter the invisible blockade of Chilean copper exports by Kennecott. Popular forces and classes have opposed these tendencies and the old order through numerous movements of resistance, for example, abortive military uprisings in Brazil during the 1920s; electoral strategies, resulting in social democratic regimes; and revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua.

During the 1950s and 1960s a wave of popular movements contributed to the fall of military dictatorships, including those of Batista in Cuba, Perón in Argentina, Rojas Pinilla in Colom-

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bia, Péréz Jiménez in Venezuela, and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. With the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua in 1979, a second wave has appeared to challenge military rule elsewhere in Latin America. The struggle of Latin Americans is toward a democratic opening in the search for human rights, provision for basic needs of the people, and a rise in the material level of life. The upsurge of pressure in some countries and the revolutionary fervor elsewhere are evident, particularly in the Southern Cone of South America.

In Argentina, political exiles returned to participate in the elections of October 1983. Argentines succeeded in their demands to end military rule and repression and are seeking retribution for the thousands of cases of persons tortured or missing, a process that has accelerated since the defeat over the Malvinas or Falkland Islands.

In Chile the political party structure and a once powerful labor movement are intact, although weak, as popular forces rally around the opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship and the struggle to end military rule in effect since September 1973. A broad coalition of opposition parties, ranging from right to left, has appeared; while the Catholic Church, conciliatory in its relations with the military over the years, has gone on the offensive against the regime.

In Uruguay in a 1980 plebiscite voters rejected the proposition that the military should remain in power, and in late 1982 also expressed their opposition to a regime that since 1973 has brutally repressed the people. Both legal and illegal parties have aligned in opposition.

During November 1982, elections in Brazil signaled an effort on the part of the military to legitimize its rule and contend with the rising opposition, especially in the labor movement but also in a new party system.

What are the implications of these democratic openings? First, the period of severe repression and torture in these countries together with the legitimacy of strong, authoritarian governments are being seriously challenged. Second, with the demise of urban and rural guerrilla movements (the Tupamaros in Uruguay, Montoneros in Argentina, and diverse Communist and

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Marxist splinter groups in Brazil), the challenge is now taking a peaceful course. Finally, the challenge is rooted in a deteriorating economic situation. In Argentina and Brazil long-term foreign debt is well above $100 billion, and the international banking community has applied monetary and fiscal constraints, while in Chile the free market program of Milton Friedman and the "Chicago boys" has collapsed in the face of unemployment of about 25 percent, inflation of over 50 percent, a decline in GNP of 13 percent, and a foreign debt of $18 billion. Against this background the prospects for the opening in Brazil can be examined in detail.

For nearly two decades the military has dominated the Brazilian political system. Today three elements are important in any analysis of this system. First, the dominant authoritarian order functions under the doctrine, ideology, and organization of the national security state. Second, a fragile, somewhat superficial bourgeois democratic or parliamentary system serves both to legitimize the military-controlled state and to provide space for dissent and opposition. Finally, there is the challenge of mass society, including an increasingly independent labor movement, a popular and progressive Catholic Church, and thousands of grass-roots groups.

The Doctrine of National Security

Envisaged a decade prior to the 1964 coup and promulgated through the Superior War College in Rio de Janeiro, the national security state became a reality with the coup. The takeover of the state and the imposition of the doctrine of national security was guided by General Golbery de Couto e Silva, the *eminence grise* of the regime, until his resignation in late 1981. The principal tenets of this doctrine included the belief that Latin America is under the sphere of U.S. influence in a world oriented to inevitable war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus no third way or neutral position is possible, and Brazil must serve as a junior partner of the United States. Further, Communist subversion in Latin America must be countered from within, necessitating the establishment of a large repressive apparatus. Thus some 700,000 persons were organized

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into a network of intelligence agencies that operate outside congressional control and under the direction of the military executive. In addition, the state implemented an exploitative model of capitalist development; the state would collaborate with multinational enterprise, continue to manipulate the labor unions, and intervene in internal affairs at any time. No individual personality would dominate the state apparatus, thus allowing the state to be pervasive in every respect.*

After 15 years of repression, constraints on freedoms of expression, censorship, disappearances, and torture, the consolidated state and its regime had to provide space in an attempt to legitimize and expand its base of authority and power. In 1978 and 1979 some 4 million workers in 15 states participated in strikes in order to recoup lost wages and gain control from the government over the union structure. At the same time intellectuals throughout the country demanded an end to the repression and torture of political prisoners, a return to parliamentary democracy, and an amnesty for the thousands who had lost their political rights. Officially, the military accepted these changes and began to promote a period of liberalization. Only an official government party and an opposition party had been permitted to contest elections since the breakup of the multiparty system in 1965, but by 1978 the opposition party had won in the large industrial states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and elsewhere, so the military devised a strategy to permit several parties to emerge and at the same time to splinter the majority opposition. Elections were set for November 15, 1982, for federal deputies and senators, municipal councillors and mayors, and, for the first time since 1965, for state governors. An amnesty permitted exiled politicians to return from abroad, to participate in debate and campaigning, and to denounce the practices of the government.

While space was given the opposition to participate, the ultimate objective of the liberalization was to ensure dominance. In the November voting the opposition was victorious in 10 of

* The best source on the National Security state is Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, forthcoming).

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22 states and now holds a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. In 1985 a president will be elected indirectly through an electoral college consisting of the members of congress and six delegates from each of the states. Thus the military is assured control of Brazil for the remainder of the decade.

The Parliamentary Opposition

Once exiled politicians and intellectuals returned, they joined with opposition elements that had remained in the country. Five parties participated in the November elections, including four in the opposition and one supporting the government. These parties represent new political alignments, and they also have ties to the earlier party systems. For example, the two main parties, the pro-government Social Democratic Party (PDS) and the opposition Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), drew their main support from the previous military-imposed two-party system of 1965 to 1978. Another opposition party, the Brazilian Workers' Party (PTB), using the name of a party founded in 1945, was led by Ivette Vargas, niece of Getúlio Vargas, the party's original founder.

The strength of the PDS was in the rural Northeast states where patriarchal families continue to give support to the established order and the military. The party suffered from the defection of conservative politicians and businesspeople who had become frustrated with government policies and formed the Popular Party (PP), known as the "bankers' party." Early in 1982 the PP merged with the PMDB, and its representatives were able to win victories in several disputed states; for example, Tancredo Neves is now governor of Minas Gerais. The PDS, however, controls 12 state governorships, 234 of 479 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and 40 of 69 Senate seats.

The PMDB, with control over nine states, represents a broad coalition of forces, including the conservative PP, moderates represented by Franco Montoro, victorious governor of the state of São Paulo, and progressive and socialist-oriented elements led by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, well-known social scientist and now senator from São Paulo, and Miguel Arraes, former leftist governor of Pernambuco during the early 1960s

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and now federal deputy. The party also includes the mainstream "Eurocommunists" of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), along with the main faction of the dissident, pro-Albanian Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B).

The Democratic Workers Party (PDT) is a splinter of the PTB, the consequence of a dispute between its leader, Leonel Brizola, and Ivette Vargas. A former governor of Rio Grande do Sul and brother-in-law of the late João Goulart, the president deposed by the 1964 coup, Brizola today is governor of Rio de Janeiro. A nationalist and socialist and follower of the Second International, Brizola is perhaps representative of the most serious threat to the conservative regime.

The most interesting of the opposition parties, the Workers' Party (PT), is headed by Luís Inácio da Silva or "Lula," known for his leadership of the São Paulo strikes. Lula was an unsuccessful candidate for governor of São Paulo, and his party won only a handful of congressional seats. However, it clearly is the only grass-roots, working-class-oriented, and socialist party. In addition to its labor leadership, its ranks include intellectuals such as Francisco Weffort and José Alvaro Moisés as well as Eduardo Suplicy, a socialist economist and federal deputy from São Paulo. The PT is bolstered by support from thousands of popular movements at the neighborhood level, among women's groups, and in the 80,000 community base groups organized through the progressive Church. Additionally, small Trotskyist and dissident Communist groups work through the party.

What are the prospects for this parliamentary opposition? It controls a majority in the Chamber,* along with ten states that produce four fifths of the gross national product, three fifths of the land mass, and a majority of the population. Control over the relevant states ensures the appointment of the mayors of important cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, as well as administration of some important enterprises such as the VASP airline of São Paulo and some state banks. The opposition is free to legislate in areas of health, education, and public transportation. It is able to expose the political police and the indiscriminate killing by death squads.

* In July 1983 the PTB aligned with the PDS to give the government a majority, but divisions in both parties made this tenuous at best.

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Nevertheless, the possibility of any substantial reform through the Congress is not great, for a number of reasons. First, the party system is unstable and fragmented. The PMDB seems to be moving toward a center position under the former PP leadership of Tancredo Neves (for example, the PMDB governors refuse to form a united front against the government, and some of them seem inclined to re-establish their former ties to the government and the PDS). Regional differences continue to divide efforts to unify national parties. Parties also tend to revolve around personalities such as Brizola and Arraes. Further, there is a possibility that the PDT and PTB will seek a coalition, although there are also indications of a PTB alliance with the PDS which would give the government its majority in the Chamber. Brizola also talks of the possibility of a new socialist party comprised of his PDT, left elements of the PMDB, the PT, and perhaps the PTB. The *caudillo* style of political leadership, represented by Brizola, is resented by the mass orientation of the PT, however. The PT finds itself in struggle with the PCB over control of the labor movement, for Communist leaders allegedly cooperate with the government to ensure their control over labor and perhaps to attain legality for the party; while independent labor leaders tied to the PT seek autonomy for the labor movement. The illegal PCB is deeply divided. Luís Carlos Prestes, expelled from the Central Committee, supported Brizola and the PDT rather than the PMDB under which many Communists ran as candidates; in Rio Prestes-supported candidates won under the PDT, while PMDB candidates fared poorly. There is also the problem that Brazil has no tradition of national parties: there were no legal national parties until 1945, and since 1922 only the PCB has shown itself capable of functioning in a disciplined way at the national level, although it has been illegal all but two years during that time.*

Government manipulation ensures perpetual weaknesses in the party system. Since 1964 there has occurred the restructuring of the parties, a series of institutional acts that purged dissidents, and constraints on political activity. Even today

* For background, see Ronald H. Chilcote, *The Brazilian Communist Party: Conflict and Integration, 1922-1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

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deputies and senators do not have full parliamentary immunity, and a member of Congress who makes an offensive speech can be tried by the Supreme Court and if found guilty loses his mandate. Further, the executive can legislate through a procedure known as *decurso de prazo*, under which Congress is given only 45 days to examine a proposal; any bill not put to a vote in this period becomes law. Congress is forbidden to legislate on economic and financial matters. It can hold only five investigative hearings per session, and access to evidence is limited, thus placing limits on its ability to monitor the actions of the executive. Candidates for political office are unable to debate on television and radio during a period of 60 days prior to elections.

From time to time the government introduces "electoral packages" to ensure its majority. In November 1981 a change required voters to choose only one party slate of candidates, thereby consolidating the government vote through its rural-based network in the Northeast where votes are dependent on local political bosses. In May 1982 the government decreed a two thirds vote for amendments to the constitution, once it became clear that an opposition majority could undo existing constraints. A recent government proposal to create three new rural states is a move to expand its base.

Another dilemma may be that domination of the party system by politicians and intellectuals tends to obscure a potentially powerful opposition. The role of the popular Church and the labor movement, for instance, may be overlooked in attention to seemingly important, yet superficial, parties. In particular, the underlying class differences and class struggle may be obscured by the side-show of electoral politics and parliamentary maneuver.

The Mass Opposition

During the early 1960s and the late 1970s and to the present time, the labor movement has struggled for autonomy and independence from government controls, originally established under Vargas' "New State" regime. Widespread strikes in the industrial centers of the state of São Paulo constituted a serious confrontation with the military regime. The thousands of popu-

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lar organizations that have appeared in the period of liberalization revealed a broad mobilization of people opposed to the national security state. The potential for real change most likely is within these organizations and the labor movement, rather than through the parliamentary opposition.

Analysis of the future is speculative, but several aspects must be considered. First, there is the split in the labor movement over leadership ties to the PT and the PCB, as well as the question whether unions will be independent or tied to the government apparatus. It also will be interesting to observe to what extent the labor leadership will continue to work through the party system, at both party and union levels simultaneously, or exclusively through the unions. Lula, for example, is both an articulate labor leader and politician. For the time being, his role is primarily political, leading his party, while others within the metallurgical unions have emerged to take his place in the union.

There is also the appearance of new leadership in the popular, mass-based organizations. Many of these organizations have emerged spontaneously, within the neighborhood *bairros* and the base communities. Much of this mobilization has been inspired by the popular segment of the Catholic Church which has encouraged people to seek solutions to spiritual as well as everyday needs through new forms of mobilization. It is clear that these activities are largely unconnected to prevailing bourgeois structures, and that they manifest a genuine commitment to change and to solutions of problems of the people.

While the popular Church has stimulated the formation of tens of thousands of base communities and the mobilization of millions of activists, it also stands apart from traditional and conservative elements of the Church, especially in the hierarchy and the ruling classes. Over recent months these elements have manifested their sentiments, but it is clear that the survival of the Church in Brazil depends on its continuing to attempt to deal with human needs at the social, political, and economic levels. The Church has become one of the most powerful institutions to oppose military rule, and many of its members have been victims of the repression. It would appear that there will be no turning away from this progressive course.

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It will be interesting to observe the impact of the political opposition at the local level. Will Brizola mobilize an opposition to take action in Rio and what are the potential outcomes? Will Montoro and a competent group of technicians around him be able to contend with some of the serious economic and social problems of São Paulo, e.g., unemployment, inadequate wages in the face of rampant inflation, and the like? The PT was victorious in the municipality of Diadema near São Paulo. Diadema has high unemployment and an illiteracy rate of 38 percent, extraordinary in an industrial center. The new mayor intends to implement a literacy program similar to that used in revolutionary Nicaragua and under the direction of Paulo Freire, whose techniques are internationally known.* Given the inadequate resources and federal neglect of municipalities, what are the prospects for solving these problems?

Finally, to what extent will there be any convergence of intellectual and working-class leadership? The PT represents an effort in this direction, and apparently the effort to maintain a grass-roots organization has been somewhat successful, in spite of the amorphous character of that organization and the difficulty it has in imposing political discipline. It is apparent, however, that most Brazilian intellectuals are isolated from the real problems of Brazil. During the period of the opening, they have not done well in relating theory to practice. This may be a reflection of their own class roots, their personal ambitions, or a system that has not permitted them much space.

In the light of this analysis, it is obvious that while an opening has appeared in contemporary Brazil, a transition to democracy has not been achieved, and the prospects for democracy are not bright. This should not diminish our interest in Brazilian politics as long as a hard-line military chooses not to intervene with another coup but seeks instead to resolve the contradictions of its authoritarian national security state and to find ways of legitimizing its existence by permitting space for an emerging opposition to operate and for a mobilizing labor movement to mature.

* See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

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ON MARXISM AND ETHIOPIAN STUDENT RADICALISM IN NORTH AMERICA

BY TESFAYE DEMMELLASH

The ideals and aims which motivate radical third world student movements generally reflect broader popular aspirations for political and socioeconomic change. Such movements are political in the sense that, going beyond narrow educational goals and sectional concerns, they champion the interests and struggles of oppressed classes and nations. Indeed, in underdeveloped societies where classes tend to be weakly grounded in forces and relations of production, and as such lack adequate material and ideological capacities to act as autonomous agents of socioeconomic change in the sense originally theorized by Marx, progressive student movements and other "unconventional" carriers of revolutionary consciousness and practice acquire special political importance.

But exactly what is the nature and political significance of leftist third world student movements, and what do such movements perceive their role and basic task in social change to be? The purpose of this article is to make a modest contribution to an understanding of issues and problems that this question suggests.

To that end, I shall examine critically the experience of a particular group of militant third world student intelligentsia, namely, that of the Ethiopian Student Union in North America (ESUNA). ESUNA's origins go back to the late 1950s, but it became politically active only from 1965 on. During the period from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, ESUNA played an im-

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portant role in the ideological struggle against feudalism and imperialism in Ethiopia. It did so both as an integral part of a progressive movement of Ethiopian students and intellectuals at home and abroad as well as a Marxist union in its own right.

However, the fact that ESUNA is now politically dormant, indeed for all practical purposes defunct, raises the questions: How successful were ESUNA intelligentsia in grasping Marxist theory and using it to formulate a radical political project for the Ethiopian Student Movement in North America? And what were some of the problems with ESUNA's attempt to politicize and radicalize its aims, discourses, and practices through Marxism? The answers to these questions lie in part in the way in which the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) as a whole emerged as a militant opposition to Haile Selassie's autocratic regime from the mid-1960s on. We begin, therefore, with a brief account of the emergence and radicalization of the ESM.

The Rise of the ESM as an Oppositional Social Force

The genesis of the ESM as an opposition to autocratic rule in Ethiopia can be traced back to 1960 when in December of that year "students of the University College of Addis Ababa became the only organized group to extend public support to the abortive coup staged against Haile Selassie."[1] But the year 1965 was the critical turning point in the emergence of radical student opposition to autocracy in Ethiopia. In February of that year university students in Addis Ababa took to the streets and engaged in a public demonstration under the slogan "land to the tiller," thereby boldly confronting the feudal Ethiopian polity with a revolutionary demand for land redistribution.

The 1965 demonstration was a historic event in the growth of the ESM in that it ushered in a new era of student political consciousness and radicalism abroad as well as at home. Sparked by the militant slogan "land to the tiller," and in solidarity with their sister unions at home, the heretofore politically inactive Ethiopian Student Association in North America (ESANA) and the Union of Ethiopian Students in Europe (ESUE) held their thirteenth and fifth Congresses, respectively, in that same year. From these Congresses emerged, in the words of ESANA, "a new definition of principles and a new course of action," a de-

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termination in short "to liquidate the [Ethiopian] feudal system . . . and throw our lot with the oppressed masses of Ethiopia."[2]

As the 1960s wore on, the militancy of student opposition to Haile Selassie's autocratic rule grew in spite of state repression. Students focused their protest on a wide range of issues, from concrete socioeconomic matters which had a direct bearing on the livelihood of workers and the poor in Addis Ababa to the military presence and cultural hegemony of U.S. imperialism in Ethiopia. Student agitation took various forms, including "organizing rallies and panel discussions, and . . . publishing a militant paper, *Tagel* (*Struggle*), class boycotts, strikes, and street demonstrations.[3] The latter often entailed skirmishes, and occasionally more deadly encounters, with state security forces. Using these and other forms of protest, and undaunted by government crackdowns, the ESM continued to express its opposition to the ancient regime well into the early 1970s.

When in February 1974 revolution broke out in Ethiopia and the broad masses themselves—workers, taxi drivers, teachers, the lower and middle ranks of the armed forces, and other oppressed social strata—took matters of emancipatory struggle into their own hands, students enthusiastically fought along with them. But the militant studentry was not content with fighting for sectional interests and short-term objectives. Rather, it demanded nothing less than the radical transformation of the Ethiopian social order as a whole. Going beyond agitating against Haile Selassie's tottering monarchy, it called into question monarchic rule as such in Ethiopia. It is worth noting in this regard that the failure of Prime Minister Endalkachew, a representative of the more bourgeoisified fraction of the artistocratic class who came to power following the outbreak of the February Revolution, to consolidate his rule and thereby enable the ancient regime to reform its way out of the political crisis was in no small measure due to the unrelenting pressure that was brought to bear on it by radical student opposition.

Marxism and the ESM

Exactly when it was first introduced into the Ethiopian Student Movement cannot be readily ascertained, but by the

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late 1960s Marxism had gained an influential position within the movement both at home and abroad. Marxist thinking easily lent itself to the highly oppositional, antifeudal, and anti-imperialist orientation that Ethiopian student activism assumed from the mid-1960s on. The disenchantment of Ethiopian youth with their country's backward feudal tradition, and their keen awareness that that tradition was sustained by contemporary capitalism-cum-imperialism, naturally led them to entertain Marxist ideas and formulas of change. Marxism appealed to the Ethiopian student intelligentsia not only because it contained a radical critique of both capitalism and feudalism, but also because it offered them, as no other indigenous or foreign intellectual tradition could, a different structural model of national development and an alternative conception of the good society.

Thanks in part to the Westernized institutional environment of the Addis Ababa University, which afforded the ESM a relatively privileged arena within a feudal society in which liberal and radical ideas could be entertained and acted out, the ESM was able to develop through Marxism a working model of progressive political discourse and practice. This model was in sharp contrast to the unprincipled and untheoretical politics of palace intrigue, paternalism, and feudal bravado that was characteristic of Haile Selassie's autocratic rule.

But the fact that the ESM had no organic links to broader social forces in Ethiopia, especially prior to the February Revolution of 1974, that far from forging such links it was only thinking and acting Marxism *on behalf* of the masses, meant that the movement's Marxist world outlook was a product of little more than pure intellectual construction and socialization. Thus, while Ethiopian student activists took ostensibly radical Marxist positions on such crucial issues as the national question and class struggle in Ethiopia, they tended to do so in a sweeping global and abstract form which was not grounded in the historically specific contradictions, political traditions, and cultural practices of Ethiopian society. Content with being "radical" in the easy formal theoretical sense of faithfully replicating the classic statements of Marx, Lenin, and their followers on proletarian internationalism, militant Ethiopian student intelligentsia saw little need to independently theorize from a Marxist

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perspective how and the extent to which social conflicts in Ethiopia fit into global class struggles. In large measure because its evaluation of Ethiopian political tradition was so negative and rejectionist, the ESM vanguard could neither adequately grasp that tradition nor critically interrogate orthodox Marxism itself in the light of the concrete historical experience of the Ethiopian nation. It is not surprising therefore that notwithstanding the ostensible commitment of the ESM to Marxist ideas, concepts, and practices, Marxist *theorizing* within the movement was limited by formalism and abstract radicalism. The following excerpt from an editorial entitled "Purge of Feudal Legacy" which appeared in the November 17, 1969, issue of *Struggle,* the militant paper of the University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA), is indicative of this theoretical shortcoming of the Marxism of the ESM:

> In our Ethiopian context, the true revolutionary is one who has shattered all sentimental and ideological ties with feudal Ethiopia . . . our rallying points are not a common history, a feudal boundary . . . religious institutions, regional, ethnic [and] linguistic affiliations, but the cause of the oppressed classes, who are the ultimate makers of history. That is why we are international, because the masses have no nation.[4]

USUAA's sweeping, onesidedly global Marxist radicalism as well as the ultra-leftist conception of the true Ethiopian revolutionary which came out of it was not shared by all progressive students within the ESM abroad. Ideological disputes arose within the ESM in Europe and North America in the late 1960s between "an older generation of students who had gone abroad in the early and middle 1960s . . . [and] a younger generation, who traveled later in the decade and were more immediately influenced by the radicalization of the students in Addis Ababa itself."[5] Since it is not possible here to go into a detailed discussion of the substantive issues which became the focus of contention within the movement, it must suffice to note that the more doctrinaire Marxist ideological line that the younger generation subscribed to, particularly vis-à-vis the national question in Ethiopia, was both theoretically and politically unacceptable to the older members of the ESM abroad.

With respect to the ESM in North America in particular,

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the ultimate outcome of ideological conflict was the split of ESUNA in 1971, and the complete displacement of the ESUNA old guard by a younger generation of students. Following the split, the more strident version of the Marxism of ESUAA that the latter group brought with it to North America in the late 1960s and early 1970s gained a dominant position within a reconstituted ESUNA. With this overview of the growth and radicalization of the ESM as background, we may now turn to a discussion of some of the problems in ESUNA's Marxism and political activism.

Marxism and ESUNA's Ambiguous Ideological Self-Image

Following its reconstitution in 1971, ESUNA did not officially proclaim Marxism as its ideology. In theory, the union was supposed to be a "mass movement" of progressive Ethiopian students and intellectuals in North America in which *all* anti-feudal and anti-imperialist ideas, including bourgeois ideas, were allowed to contend. In actuality, however, the full range of ESUNA's doctrinal activities—from the substantive content of the literature it put out in its name to the conceptual categories it employed in its description and analysis of Ethiopian society—evinced an unmistakable preoccupation with the letter as well as the spirit of Marxism. A good portion of its organizational effort, moreover, was directed at discovering and attacking what it considered to be "bourgeois intellectuals," "reformists," and other undesirable elements both within its ranks and in the Ethiopian community at large in North America.

The question therefore arises: Why the incongruence between ESUNA's professed "liberal" ideological posture on the one hand, and its actual "Marxist" behavior on the other?

In part, ESUNA's dual ideological orientation was an outcome of the inability of its vanguard to adequately clarify—in both theory and practice—the relationship that should obtain between ideological struggle and practical struggle, or, more specifically, between the political activism of Ethiopian students in North America and *real* political struggle in Ethiopia. For to support the cause of revolution in Ethiopia from far away in study groups and congresses in the safety of college campuses in North America is one thing, while to be a revolutionary in

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Ethiopia itself and risk life and limb for the cause is another. But the undifferentiated nature of ESUNA's concept of "struggle" was not simply a reflection of intellectual inadequacy or confusion within ESUNA. More fundamentally, I think, the problem had to do with the nature of the task Marxism was called upon to perform for ESUNA and the manner in which it was expected to perform it.

ESUNA came to Marxism not only, or even primarily, in search of a radical conceptual tool with which to analyze and criticize Ethiopian social reality objectively, but also to constitute itself as a revolutionary subject or protagonist in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism. ESUNA intelligentsia believed in the power of Marxist ideas to transform social consciousness and practice, and strove to make Marxism guide their thoughts, discourse, and practice. Thus Marxism, as understood by the ESUNA vanguard and popularized by it within the union, controlled, to use Kellner's words, "the limits of discourse, by setting the political agenda, by defining the issues and terms of debate, and by excluding oppositional ideas."[6] Since they placed a premium on doctrinal purity and organizational unity, ESUNA radicals were concerned to avoid contamination with what they perceived to be non-Marxist ideas and practices.

But at the same time ESUNA militants sought to build and lead a broad mass-based movement of all progressive Ethiopian students and intellectuals in North America. This aim implied that a more inclusive ideological basis had to be created than Marxism alone could provide, one that would make possible the participation of Ethiopian youth of different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and varying levels of intellectual capacity and political commitment. As the ESUNA leadership itself correctly recognized, this underlying ideological tension created an "identity crisis" for the ESM in North America.[7] Was the movement a "mass organization" of all progressive and patriotic Ethiopian students in North America, or was it, in fact, a Marxist political party of sorts dedicated first and foremost to the cause of "proletarian" revolution in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the world?

ESUNA made a number of attempts in the course of the early 1970s to clarify the issues involved and dispel confusion

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within its ranks about the political role and tasks of the ESM in North America.[8] But no satisfactory resolution of the problem was forthcoming. The ESUNA leadership "resolved" the contradictory ideological self-image of the union by simply denying that ESUNA was a Marxist organization, arguing that unlike a working class party a student body such as ESUNA could not make commitment to Marxism the basis of its unity. This denial, which was a reflection of the need felt by ESUNA radicals to create a mass base for ESUNA by appealing to non-Marxist as well as Marxist Ethiopian youth, was a disingenuous attempt to "hide" Marxism, as it were, behind the veil of a popular negative consciousness of antifeudalism and anti-imperialism. But there was never any doubt that ESUNA was nothing less than dogmatic in its commitment to Marxism as it understood it.

ESUNA's Marxist Political Discourse and Practice

At the root of ESUNA's "identity crisis" was the concrete problem of how to go beyond abstract Marxist opposition to feudalism and imperialism and define, in practical as well as theoretical terms, its political aims, tasks, and methods of struggle. In other words, how could they connect with the emancipatory struggles of oppressed classes and nationalities in Ethiopia while operating as a student movement in North America?

Recognition of the practical fact of its location far away from the Ethiopian masses no doubt lay behind ESUNA's formulation of the view—which gained increasing currency from the year 1971 on—that its primary objective was to remold and raise the social consciousness of its own members through Marxism. But concern for consciousness-raising also underlay the moral obligation felt by many members of ESUNA, most of whom were of middle-class background, to sever all their bourgeois social ties and reforge their class loyalties in line with the interests of the oppressed masses in Ethiopia. It also attested to the fact that, apart from their eagerness to participate in revolutionary praxis through Marxism, ESUNA members were motivated by an *intellectual* aspiration to disengage themselves from their feudal national tradition and link up with a progressive world culture of enlightenment, democracy, and socialism.

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As conducted within ESUNA, radical political discourse and practice directed at remolding and raising social consciousness largely involved the collective and programmatic "study" of Marxism. But it was not a passive, merely scholarly, activity confined to reading and expounding Marxist texts. It also entailed acting out one's rationally acquired consciousness in practice by engaging in various forms of ideological struggle. These included the devaluation of familial and affective ties in interpersonal relations in favor of doctrinal fellowship and comradery based on common commitment to revolutionary causes, exchanging information, views, agitational literature, and material and moral support with the ESM at home, discovering and attacking "enemies" of the Ethiopian masses within the Ethiopian community in North America while affirming solidarity with other progressive groups perceived to be "friends," and staging public demonstrations against American and Soviet superpower maneuvers in and around Ethiopia.

These multifaceted forms of political activism gave ESUNA members more than the vicarious gratification of taking part in the real struggle against feudalism and imperialism in Ethiopia. They were based on the awareness that ideological struggle is an important aspect of class struggle, and that revolutionary theory and practice are mutually activating and reinforcing. In fostering nondiscursive as well as discursive forms of ideological struggle, ESUNA Marxists seemed to recognize that the field on which social consciousness works is both symbolic and concrete, experiential and ideational, and normative as well as cognitive.

What ESUNA militants did not adequately recognize, however, was that as Marxists they were engaged, to use Ted Benton's formulation, in "two quite distinct, though related, types of discourse, which are in turn interwoven with two distinct types of social practice."[9] There is, to use Benton's words further,

> first, scientific discourse, governed by rules, procedures and values such that concept-formation and correction is subordinated to the priority of achieving objective knowledge of the relationships, processes and transformations of its objects; second, the discourses of tactical and strategic debate, contestation, legitimation and persuasion. Among the costs of conflating the first type of discourse into the second is that practical debate in and about politics is thereby deprived of a source of clarification, and a major resource

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for its advancement, and degenerates into the mere articulation of pipe-dreams. Among the costs of the reverse conflation is the pseudo-scientific legitimation of tyranny.[10]

The two types of discourse and practice that Benton notes here were virtually indistinguishable in ESUNA's Marxism, with all that this implied for ESUNA's capacity to clarify "practical debate in and about politics" within the ESM in North America from a Marxist *theoretical* perspective. Because ESUNA militants were so categorical in their rejection of their country's "feudal" political tradition, and so immediately committed to the ideal of the intellectual as revolutionary, ideological struggle aimed at forging alternative political identities, values, symbols, and practices had prior claim over concerns of scientific theory as such in their Marxism. Indeed, ESUNA's preoccupation with the ideological reconstruction and validation of its own political identity and praxis through Marxism meant the reduction of Marxist theoretical discourse within the union to the articulation of simplified truths, radical phrases emptied of conceptual content, agitational slogans, and action programs. On the whole ESUNA Marxists were really hack theorists given to grossly partisan polemical appropriation and oversimplification of Marxist ideas and concepts. They were inspired neither by Marxist theory in the strict sense nor by considerations of practical problems of revolutionary social and cultural change in Ethiopia. ESUNA's Marxism emphasized instead the ideological purity and political militancy of the ESM as such, even if that meant, as it did, the avoidance of critical dialogue with and about Marxism itself.

The stress on doctrinal purity and unity within ESUNA in fact entailed the application of methods of scriptural exegesis to Marxist texts, based on the belief that there is only one correct interpretation of the writings of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and their followers, and that that interpretation is spontaneously given by the texts themselves. And the defense of true Marxism so understood, that is, as Holy Writ, from "reformist" and "revisionist" heretics became a central ideological concern of the ESUNA faithful. Literal reading and defense of Marxist texts in turn helped cement the "proletarian" ideological self-image of ESUNA, even while obstructing an intellectually active in-

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quiring engagement with the Marxist tradition, with a resulting production of a version of Marxist theory which was fundamentally antitheoretical.

The upshot of this was that Marxist discourse as conducted within ESUNA could not transcend the limits of both formalism and idealism, and that the political aims and practices of the ESM in North America were denied the benefit of critical appraisal, clarification, and correction as only Marxist theory could have given them. Hence the inability of ESUNA militants to self-critically and systematically scrutinize the nature, conditions, possibilities, and limits of their radical rhetoric and politics in North America and the relation of these to real political struggles in Ethiopia. In its zeal to keep up and "integrate" itself with what it correctly saw as the tidal wave of mass struggles in Ethiopia following the outbreak of the February 1974 Revolution, ESUNA so totally and uncritically identified itself with the particular fortunes of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), that when EPRP was crushed in the late 1970s by the post-revolutionary Ethiopian state, ESUNA's credibility and viability suffered an equally fatal blow. The union had over-enthusiastically welcomed the emergence of EPRP in 1975 as "a guarantee of our victory over our enemies."[11]

In sum, ESUNA no doubt played a leading role in the radicalization of the consciousness of Ethiopian youth in North America and Ethiopia, and thereby advanced Marxist thinking in and about Ethiopia. Moreover, many of the progressive ideas that ESUNA advocated and fought for, most notably the demand for land redistribution, were translated into concrete policies and programs in post-revolutionary Ethiopia, although they were implemented in ways and under circumstances that ESUNA Marxists did not theoretically expect or like.[12]

Admittedly, the sheer fact of geographical isolation from Ethiopian conditions placed an objective constraint on ESUNA's capacity to overcome sectarian Marxist radicalism and acquire a truly practical revolutionary consciousness. But if the Marxism of USUAA in the late 1960s and that of EPRP in the late 1970s (both of which directly influenced ESUNA's ultra-leftist radicalism) are any guide, ESUNA's isolation from

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the Ethiopian masses was not so much geographical as it was sociopolitical, cultural, and intellectual. As Halliday and Molyneux have noted, "the lack of experience of practical mass work, and the failure to combine a socialist intellectual commitment with a concrete appreciation of the specific features of Ethiopian society or the political traditions of the country" was a basic shortcoming of the Ethiopian left at home as well as abroad.[13] ESUNA shared with EPRP a marked impatience with ideological mass work and an over-eagerness to be a protagonist in revolutionary struggle *on behalf* of the masses rather than *with* them.

But there was one crucial difference between the experience of the Ethiopian left at home and that of its counterpart in North America, namely, while many members of EPRP paid dearly with their lives for theoretical and strategic mistakes made by their short-lived party, ESUNA's theoretical shortcomings, which were not unlike those of EPRP, did not have deadly material consequences for ESUNA militants, the vast majority of whom opted to stay put in North America while the Ethiopian revolution ran its course.

By way of conclusion, I should like to make a few general observations regarding the sense in which ESUNA's political activism can be said to fall within a broader pattern of radical student movements in underdeveloped societies. As with student circles in such diverse historical-cultural settings as late nineteenth-century Russia, early twentieth-century China, and contemporary Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the Ethiopian Student Movement, of which ESUNA was an integral part, provided the initial spark behind the radicalization of petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, workers, and peasants. Lacking a secure base in a developed system of forces and relations of production, potential ruling classes in third world social formations seem to be forever short of material and ideological resources necessary to exercise hegemony, as opposed to mere domination, over society. The broad masses in the third world on the other hand have not been very successful in producing their own "organic intellectuals," able to formulate for them an adequate conception of the fundamental causes and conditions of their domination and strategies for their emancipation. These structural and

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cultural conditions in the third world allow student intelligentsia to constitute themselves as a significant, if only occasional, contender for moral, intellectual, and political leadership of the masses. Student intelligentsia claim ideological leadership of society often both in collision with and in collusion with other "unconventional" agents of socialist consciousness and practice, particularly members of the armed forces.

The Ethiopian case of student political activism also suggests that radical third world student movements emerge and assert themselves only in certain critical periods of transition in the histories of underdeveloped nations. They help societies move through difficult times of crisis and change, but once a new sociopolitical order is more or less established and the excitement of change is superseded, they tend to lose their ethic of rebellion and become deradicalized and depoliticized. Nonetheless, many of the progressive ideas and values that radical third world student movements work out and fight for are accepted by social forces and movements beyond student circles.

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11. ESUNA, *Combat* 5, no. 1 (August 1976), p. 3.
12. Thus the group under whose leadership Ethiopia made the transition to socialism was not a vanguard communist party of the proletariat and the peasantry as ESUNA had theoretically anticipated and wished, but a government of radical junior military officers and NCOs and their civilian allies.
13. Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution,* p. 141.

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BELIZE—ON THE RIM OF THE CAULDRON

BY DAVE BROAD

Most accounts of Central America neglect to even mention Belize. However, policy-makers in Washington have quickly become aware of the strategic importance of this small country.

Belize (formerly British Honduras) is the newest country in Central America, having gained its independence on September 21, 1981. It borders Mexico on the north, Guatemala on the west and south, and faces the Caribbean to the east. It is the most sparsely populated country in Central America. The land area, at 8,867 square miles, is slightly larger than that of El Salvador, but holds a population of only 160,000 (compared to Salvador's 5 million).

Seen against the background of the present intensifying crisis in Central America, the key question about Belize is whether it can be turned into a U.S. stronghold against the emerging national liberation and socialist movements of the region, or will be drawn into and become a part of these movements. The facts and analysis presented in what follows should help to answer this question.

The Belizean government boasts that the country stands at the crossroads between Central America and the Caribbean, and a look at the racial and ethnic make-up of the population tends to support this assertion. The majority of the population consists of Creole (black), Garifuna (black-Carib), Maya Indian and Mestizo (Indian/Spanish) people. There are also

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smaller groups of Chinese, Lebanese, East Indian, and European descent.

The official language of Belize is English, but Spanish is increasingly widely spoken. Moreover, the various ethnic groups continue to use their own languages in daily conversation.

Seedy Beginnings

Although Belize was for a century prior to independence a British colony, the territory was always a backwater of the colonial world. Belize was at the center of Maya civilization, which began its decline after 900 A.D. But neither the Spanish nor the British had much interest in this jungle-covered, swampy strip of land.

In the middle 1600s, Belize became a favored hideout of British pirates who navigated the channels off Belize's Caribbean reef. From these seedy beginnings the Baymen (as the European settlers were called) turned to the production of logwood and mahogany for the British market.

The British, although helping the Baymen to repel Spanish attacks from time to time, seemed content to maintain an informal colonial relationship with Belize. However, with growing U.S. expansionism in the 1800s, Britain moved to consolidate control over its western Caribbean dependencies, and Belize was formally colonized in 1862.

Land and Labor

Although a colonial backwater, Belize was subject to the same historical processes of land monopolization and labor control as other underdeveloped areas. Nigel Bolland describes this history as follows:

> From the beginning land ownership in Belize has been highly concentrated and, since the middle of the nineteenth century, has been in the hands of metropolitan companies, particularly the Belize Estate and Produce Co. which owns just under a million acres or almost a half of all the freehold land. Labour, initially slaves imported from Africa and the West Indian colonies, were tied to the enterprises of these landowners. (O. Nigel Bolland, "Labour Control in Post Abolition Belize," *Journal of Belizean Affairs,* December 1979, p. 22)

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Slavery was formally abolished in 1838, only to be replaced by systems of labor control which promoted wage-slavery.

> Among the techniques of labour control used in Belize were the monopolization of land ownership, a system of labor contracts, a combination of advance and truck systems to induce indebtedness, and the use of magistrates as agents of labour discipline. . . .
>
> The transition was not from slavery to freedom but, rather, from one system of labor control to another, and the old struggle between former masters and slaves continued, although in new forms. (Ibid., pp. 25, 34)

Belize then, like other underdeveloped societies, produced the familiar latifundia/plantation social structure. But because Belize had a lumber economy rather than an agricultural economy, it developed its own peculiar problems. Chief among these was "the absence of agricultural development, particularly of peasant agriculture which, with such a potentially favourable man/land ratio, could have emerged after emancipation." (Ibid., p. 33)

The landowners were, in fact, doubly interested in preventing the development of agriculture. For even though the mahogany trade steadily declined after 1850, they still required a land monopoly in order to maintain a reserve of low-wage labor. Moreover, some landowners were also merchants who jealously guarded their market for imported foodstuffs.

Today, exports of sugar and citrus have outstripped the mahogany trade, but many food items are still imported from Europe and North America. And there remains a large amount of unemployment and underemployment, especially among the black population which comprises part of a transnational labor force that drifts back and forth between the United States and Belize. Recent estimates place the Belizean population in the United States at upwards of 50,000 with smaller numbers in Canada and Europe.

Anticolonial Struggles

As with residents of other parts of the third world, Belizeans have not remained passive against the oppression of colonial powers. There were various instances when the Maya rebelled against Spanish and British land usurpation and acts of

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atrocity. And while the descendants of the Baymen would like to perpetuate the myth of harmony between the white elite and black laborers, historical evidence reveals that slavers in Belize were no more benevolent than slavers in other colonies. Belizean history is rife with stories of beatings, runaway slaves, and slave rebellions.

Post-abolition rebellions in Belize had both racial and working-class characteristics. Three periods of struggle are typical. "They were [all] violent reactions to a system of political, economic and racial oppression which had come to characterize the colony's way of life." (*Brukdown* 4, nos. 6 and 7, 1979, p. 50) The "Labourers' Riot of 1894" broke out when workers from the logging camps rebelled because their wages had been cut by a currency devaluation. Although British troops put down the rebellion and leaders fled to Mexico, the action did force a wage increase.

In the "Ex-Servicemen's Riot of 1919" black soldiers returning from Europe protested continuing racial discrimination by attacking white-owned business establishments and demanding that "British Honduras should be a black man's country." This rebellion too was put down by British troops.

By the 1930s labor struggles had matured to the point where workers were able to stage a series of strikes and demonstrations to demand employment and relief from the conditions of economic depression. These events planted the seeds of an organized labor movement and produced one of Belize's most famous labor leaders, Antonio Soberanis.

> The common factor . . . in all three of these disturbances was class conflict aggravated in 1894 by currency devaluation, in 1919 by racial discrimination and in 1934 by unemployment—all different manifestations of the same problem. (Ibid., p. 51)

Recognizing the strength of the labor movement, the colonial administration saw the need to control its growth by institutionalization, and in 1939 the Labour Department was created as a quasi-governmental body to deal with labor disturbances. The government's use of labor legislation served to effectively prevent the use of strikes and collective bargaining by labor, and trade unions were not legalized until 1941.

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Ascendant Nationalism

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the labor movement joined with petty bourgeois interests to form a strong nationalist movement. A devaluation of the Belize dollar in December 1949, combined with growing opposition to the colonial administration, led to the formation of the People's Committee. Through months of protest marches and meetings and organizational sessions, the People's Committee evolved into the People's United Party (PUP), Belize's first real political party. However, the rise of the PUP brought on the decline of the labor movement.

PUP leaders took over the leadership of the General Workers' Union (GWU), supposedly to revitalize the union executive, but actually to provide the party with a mass base. And while the old GWU leaders were both trade unionists and socialists, the PUP leaders

> possessed no coherent ideology; their concern was simply to get rid of the British by any means possible. While politically radical, their Catholic middle-class background . . . made them suspicious of the power of organized labour under the left wing [leaders]. (Peter Ashdown, "Control or Concern: the Motive for Government's Nurture of Organized Labour," *Journal of Belizean Affairs,* December 1979, p. 41)

Hence, as the PUP continued to grow, the labor movement suffered a series of divisions and declined.

Throughout the 1950s the PUP waged a successful campaign for independence. The colonial government, having first tried to smash the nationalist movement, as it had tried to smash the labor movement, was eventually forced to follow the postwar trend and seek a neocolonial accommodation with the PUP.

After steady electoral gains, the PUP led Belize to self-government in 1964. However, because of a century-old Guatemalan claim on Belizean territory, Belize did not become independent until 1981.*

* The Guatemalan claim rests on Guatemala's self-perceived position as heir to Spanish Central America. The claim has led to military provocations by the successive dictatorships which have ruled Guatemala since the CIA-sponsored coup of 1954. Because of Guatemala's intransigence, the claim has not been settled, and Belize continues to rely on British troops to protect Belizean territory.

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Current Contradictions

While the Belizean economy remains rather stagnant and lacking in infrastructure, the PUP government has managed to provide many social services to improve the lives of most Belizeans. Especially when compared to neighboring countries, Belizean achievements in education, health care, and living standards are impressive. But the economy has depended upon grants from Britain and has made no impressive gains in terms of either export earnings or import substitution. As noted above, land ownership remains highly concentrated and the earnings of middle-sized sugar and citrus producers are restricted by control of markets by transnational corporations. Meanwhile, the country continues to import foodstuffs and export workers.

With independence the PUP leaders realized that they must move to implement the party's long-awaited development program. But national, regional, and international conditions favor neither quick nor easy solutions to Belize's development problems. As Prime Minister George Price admits in his budget speech for 1983-84, the world crisis limits Belize's chances of greatly expanding earnings from export of sugar, citrus, and bananas. Exports increased over the last year but earnings decreased, and the country experienced a trade deficit of (U.S.) $40.5 million in 1982.

Regionally the situation deteriorates economically, and political struggles are becoming more acute. El Salvador and Guatemala are embroiled in civil wars; Nicaragua suffers from U.S. attempts to destroy the Sandinista revolution; and Honduras is being armed as the regional gendarme. With the Central American/Caribbean region as center field for the Reagan policy of East-West confrontation, regional politics become daily more polarized.

In Belize itself the levels of unemployment and underemployment remain high, the cost of living steadily increases, and foreign debt stands at (U.S.) $61.5 million. And as U.S. influence in Belize grows, local politics follow the regional left-right polarization.

The PUP solution to these problems is "working the mixed economy." As the *Belize Sunday Times* (February 13, 1983) explains:

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> In working the mixed economy, which is enshrined in the [PUP] Manifesto for the New and Progressive Revolution, government cooperates with the private sector and encourages the private sector to do what it is best able to do.

How will the government finance this program? With loans from Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, USAID, the World Bank, and other international capitalist lenders.

It seems that petty bourgeois nationalist movements are destined to continue re-inventing the wheel. For nowhere in the third world has encouraging "the private sector to do what it is best able to do" and relying on U.S. "aid" produced development. Such a program may have produced economic "growth" in cases such as that of Brazil. But this has meant growth for local and foreign capital and hardship and repression for the masses. The net result is not development but increased dependency.

In a recent issue of the Belize government newspaper there appeared an editorial entitled "For Belize, Not Communism or Capitalism." The editorial seems to suggest that the PUP can follow a course somewhat akin to the "African socialism" which failed so miserably for many African nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. But with the ever-quickening pace of change in the modern world, and especially in Central America, the Belizean people cannot afford the luxury of experimenting with obsolete solutions to their problems.

Which Way for Belize?

As foreign "aid" and investment filter in, the economic and social inequalities in Belize will increase. The hardships of the masses can only multiply as the Reagan solution is applied to the political turmoil in the region.

The UN estimates that there are between 5,000 and 7,000 Salvadoran refugees in Belize. Although not officially recognized as refugees, there are estimates of up to 10,000 Guatemalans in that country. And with the increasing repression by right-wing regimes in Guatemala, the flow of Guatemalans into Belize will rapidly increase. To complicate matters further, part of the Reagan solution to regional upheaval is to relieve his loyal

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puppet dictator in Haiti (Baby Doc Duvalier) of some "excess population" by settling a few thousand Haitian refugees in Belize.

So far the government has responded to the refugee influx by providing land grants in an effort to encourage agriculture in the sparsely populated areas. But these areas lack transport and marketing facilities. There is little doubt that Belize is underpopulated and must develop basic agriculture, but a rapid influx of refugees with insufficient infrastructure to support them may compound the problem rather than helping to solve it, as many policy-makers realize. (*Brukdown* 6, no. 1, 1982)

The most likely scenario is one of more social dislocation and political conflict. The Reagan administration must sense this, for it is increasing embassy personnel and Peace Corps volunteers in Belize and training officers of the Belize Defense Force (BDF) at the U.S. Army's Southern Command School in Panama (ostensibly for defense from external attack).*

Is the PUP government likely to hold together in the face of this increasing sociopolitical upheaval? This is doubtful. PUP leaders have spent the last three decades trying to coopt not only the labor movement but all political opposition. The result is one party enveloping three political tendencies—left, right, and center. This petty bourgeoisie idea of democracy and balance has succeeded in some countries, but in a country as small as Belize it is a highly unstable political configuration, especially within the context of regional political crisis. The left-right struggle will eventually lead to the ascendance of one tendency or the other. And one Belizean observer suggests that right-wing dominance has already been consolidated:

> That faction of the PUP which projects an ideological profile in sympathy with the "progressive" forces of the region, is out in the cold. In keeping with the political orthodoxy demanded in return for U.S. friendship, a tainted Assad Shoman has been denied

* Granted, the Guatemalan threat continues, but with the United States supporting both sides, it is unlikely (although not impossible) that there will be open military conflict. The Reagan administration is most likely planning to employ the BDF in turning the Belize/Guatemala frontier into a militarized zone, as has been done in the El Salvador/Honduras border area.

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the foreign ministry, and the ascendancy he enjoyed in former times is no more. The Prime Minister himself, that ultra-nationalist of the pre-independence period, has now shucked his accustomed persona, as he prepares to toe the Washington line. Our much vaunted non-alignment in foreign affairs will never materialize. The decision not to establish diplomatic relations with, or officially accept scholarships from, the Cuban government—who was as committed a supporter of our early UN efforts as the U.S. was not—is telling evidence. It is clear that we may now do nothing to upset the ideologues at the State Department. (Dean Barrow, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *Brukdown* 6, no. 1, 1982, p. 24)

However, this post-mortem on the left within the PUP may be premature. For Prime Minister Price, continuing his quarter-century balancing act, joined progressive ministers Said Musa and Assad Shoman in hosting an October 1982 meeting of representatives of the Socialist International in Belize City (much to the consternation of the right wing of the PUP). Present at the meeting were representatives of Nicaragua's Sandinista government and El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). And while Price's May 12, 1983, visit to Washington saw him toadying to Reagan, the prime minister reassumed his centrist position at the PUP convention later that same month. The convention itself was controlled by the party's right wing, but by garnering over a third of the vote for the post of party chairman the left demonstrated its significance.

Given that Belize's opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) also has a mixed configuration, though more right-wing than that of the PUP, and given that U.S. imperialism lends support to the rightists of both parties, it is quite possible that the Reagan solution for Belize will be a union of the two right-wing groupings. One thing is certain, the losers in any such outcome would be the masses of Belizean workers and peasants.

Unfortunately, there is presently no unifying mass organization which can oppose a right-wing takeover. There is a radical working-class trend in the United General Workers' Union, but the workers' movement is neither large nor strong, and the UGWU leadership has recently come under attack. And while many sugar and citrus workers are unionized, there is no peasant movement in the country as a whole. Moreover, the lack

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of a good communications system and relative "backwardness" in much of the countryside have left the rural population atomized and isolated.

On the other hand, there is a constant flow of Guatemalan and Salvadoran peasants who work for the sugar and citrus growers in the north. These illegal immigrants have served as low-wage labor and as a deterrent to strong unions in the past. But one might hope these immigrants, coming from highly politicized settings, may yet serve as a catalyst to radicalize the local peasant movement.* As a result of the Central American crisis Belizean politics is being thrust onto the world scene with a bang. Guatemalan forces have already raided Guatemalan refugee settlements in Belize, and American moves are aggravating the politico-military situation in both countries.

There is as yet no mass movement in Belize to counter reactionary trends. But the progressive tendencies in both labor and party politics now have the opportunity to meld with the regional revolutionary process to radicalize the whole of Belizean politics.

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* Just recently, left activists have formed the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR). The society's goals are to educate and politicize Belizeans, and its initial work has borne encouraging results.

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CAPITALIST HEALTH CARE

By Elizabeth Fee

The Second Sickness: Contradictions of Capitalist Health Care, by Howard Waitzkin. New York: Free Press, 1983, 282 pp., $19.95.

Howard Waitzkin dedicates this book to his grandfather, house painter and union organizer, who died from a form of liver cancer caused by the toxic solvents used in paint thinner—his union had been unsuccessfully requesting government monitoring of these chemicals. The "second sickness" of the title comes from Norman Bethune, surgeon to the liberation forces of China, and refers to the sickness and suffering generated by social causes—the lung cancers of asbestos workers, the chronic back injuries of farm workers, the premature deaths of infants whose mothers have no prenatal care. Much of the power of this book stems from the fact that its author is a physician who has directly experienced the contradictions of capitalist health care in his clinical work—with the programs of the Black Panther Party in Boston, the United Farm Workers' Union in rural California, and La Clinica de la Raza in Oakland, California. It is an impassioned work; as the author states: "There is purportedly a fine line between committed scholarship and polemic. Personally, I have not found this distinction helpful."

Much of Waitzkin's work addresses the deficiencies in the current organization of medical practice in the United States. Unlike many radical critics—most notably, Ivan Illich in *Medical*

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Nemesis—he does not simply blame physicians for the current mess, nor does he see medicine as only, or even primarily, a mechanism of social control. He does provide a critique of the ideological functions of medicine and attacks the tendency to medicalize (and thus individualize) social problems, but he allows room for the popular perception of medical care as a social good. Medicine is not, he says, a major determinant of the health status of large populations—being much less significant than working and living conditions, nutrition, sanitation, and socioeconomic development—but it does undeniably have positive effects on subpopulations, especially those without prior access to services. A redistribution of services could thus achieve definite improvements in health, especially in infant mortality; the simplest and most basic medical services would have the greatest measurable effect.

If this is the case, and there is much evidence to suggest that it is, we are now spending the vast majority of our social resources on the least effective forms of medical intervention, thus explaining why spiraling medical costs seem to bring such minimal returns in terms of improved health. The billions of dollars spent on medical goods and services have created a healthier medical industry, but not necessarily a healthier population.

Why do we make such poor use of our medical resources? In his first two chapters, Waitzkin provides a general analytic framework for understanding how the contradictions in medicine are produced by the contradictions within capitalist society, showing, for example, how the maldistribution of medical care can be understood in terms of the uneven development of the economy as a whole. Here the issues of corporate involvement in the promotion of medical technology, drugs, and even primary health services are briefly introduced, as are the ways in which these lead to escalating costs and profits—themes that are more fully addressed in later chapters.

In seeking to understand the social origins of illness, Waitzkin turns to three analysts who have received little attention in American medical literature—Friedrich Engels, Rudolf Virchow, and Salvador Allende. His chapter on their work should be sufficient reminder that concern with the social etiology of disease is hardly novel, and that there is a long history of research and analysis needing to be recovered—and developed—by those currently concerned with health policy. (An English translation of Allende's *La Realidad Medico-Social Chilena* would be most helpful in making this work more accessible to many North Americans.) One

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would have liked to have had considerably more attention paid to the social production of disease and illness in the United States, but perhaps this will be the subject of another book.

In the second part of this volume, Waitzkin returns to his main subject: contradictions in the organization of medical services. An excellent chapter on medical technology is devoted to a detailed examination of the development of coronary care units during the 1960s—an example of the overselling of many new technologies marketed before there was any real evidence of their effectiveness. Coronary care units (CCUs) provide continuous electronic monitoring of the heart's rhythm and are supposed to reduce morbidity and mortality from heart attacks. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, CCUs were sold to hospitals across the country on the basis of this claim, despite the fact that no controlled studies had been done on their effectiveness.

U.S. corporations participated in every stage of CCU research, development, promotion, and proliferation: they funded academic cardiologists who promoted CCUs in the medical and cardiological literature, helped design CCU systems, and introduced them for clinical use. One example among many: Hewlett-Packard (H-P) was one of the first corporations to jump into the coronary care market. The W. R. Hewlett Foundation, established by H-P's chief executive officer, earmarked large annual grants to Stanford University, where researchers helped design and develop the product. Stanford University, after "an undoubtedly fierce competitive examination of alternatives," chose H-P equipment for its CCU and other intensive care facilities. On the basis of this research, the American Heart Association encouraged even small and local hospitals to establish CCUs; AHA's officers were cardiologists, corporate executives, and bankers. In their 1973 Annual Report, Hewlett-Packard stressed the close relationship between corporations and medical researchers and their collaboration in shaping the health care system (pp. 18-19):

> Health care expenditures, worldwide, will continue to increase significantly in the years ahead, and a growing portion of these funds will be allocated for medical electronic equipment. Interestingly, this growth trend offers the company—working in close collaboration with researchers, clinicians, and other hospital personnel—the unique opportunity to help shape the future of health care delivery.

There was much financial support in the United States for CCU development, but no funds to support careful studies of their effectiveness. In Britain, controlled trials suggested that for many

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conditions, CCUs were no more effective than rest at home—but CCUs did have a dramatic effect in skyrocketing the costs of medical care.

Those involved in medical policy now recognize uncontrolled inflation of medical costs as a central problem in the United States. But while CCUs and similar technologies proliferate, health and welfare programs for women and children, the poor, minorities, and the aged have faced determined fiscal attacks. Cuts in food stamps, nutritional programs for women and children, and the closing of community clinics hurt the poor, leaving corporate profits intact. Cuts in Medicare and Medicaid coverage are to be followed by cuts in employer-funded insurance packages. The glamor of intensive-care technology contrasts with the realities of community medicine, where services of the simplest kind often remain inaccessible.

Waitzkin devotes considerable attention to the contradiction between the expansion of private medicine and the contraction of public services. Public financing is increasingly being channeled into private institutions, while public programs go begging. Across the country, public hospitals are being closed or transferred to private management: the hospital able to turn a profit is likely to be considered "efficient." Private hospitals engaged in "patient dumping" (sending "undesirable," i.e., uninsured, patients across town to public facilities) will soon have nowhere left to dump their unwanted patients, as even the streets fill with the homeless.

In the current situation, the community clinics started with such enthusiasm in the 1960s are struggling for survival. Hurt by cutbacks, and with many uninsured or uninsurable patients, they are dependent on external funding, and remain isolated and vulnerable. At the same time, those that survive remain a vital point of contact with community medicine and represent the possibility of a system of medical services oriented to people's needs rather than to corporate profits.

Moving from the larger structures of medical care to the micropolitics of the doctor-patient relationship, Waitzkin demonstrates the ways in which larger social contradictions penetrate even the intimacy of professional-client interactions. Three tape-recorded medical encounters are analyzed in rather devastating detail, showing the ways in which ideological messages about work, leisure, and family relations are unconsciously transmitted to patients. These analyses show the need to link medical services to social activism so that social contradictions are not simply internal-

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ized in the patient's mind and body, but can again be externalized in the struggle for social change.

In his final chapters, Waitzkin discusses potential solutions to the problems he has analyzed. One chapter is devoted to "Lessons from Chile to Cuba" and another to struggles within the United States. The analyses of Chilean and Cuban medical reforms are useful, if only to expand our vision of the possible, but they seem far removed from the realities of life under Reaganomics. Both chapters lean heavily on the distinction between reformist reforms and nonreformist reforms: reformist reforms are defined as those that "leave intact current political and economic structures, while providing small material improvements that may reduce social discontent"; nonreformist reforms "achieve true changes in power and finance and, by increasing political tension and activism, create the potential for wider political action."

Unfortunately, Waitzkin tends to use the distinction between reformist and nonreformist reforms as though any specific reform could be designated *a priori* as belonging to one or the other category. In reality, the same social intervention can in one social context or historical moment appear as a reformist reform and in another social context or historical moment as a nonreformist reform—those involved in a reform effort may themselves not know, or may incorrectly assess, its long-term implications. Because we cannot decide *a priori* whether a particular reform falls into the "reformist" or "nonreformist" category (at least as expressed in a linear either/or form), this distinction is unlikely to be very helpful as a guide to political action. Despite this caveat, Waitzkin's discussion of such issues as health maintenance organizations, alternative clinics, national health insurance, and national health service, does provide a useful guide to some of the major issues debated by the health left over the last decade.

Waitzkin addresses the central issues of health care policy today and provides a Marxist framework for understanding such problems as the inflation of medical costs and cutbacks in medical services, the domination of private and corporate interests, and the closing of public hospitals and clinics. He brings the analysis down to the interpersonal politics of the doctor-patient relationship, and then back to the larger necessity for political activism and social change. Throughout, the book is permeated by a clinician's concern for the individual suffering of those who have to bear the costs of social injustice as well as by a political commitment to structural transformation. Several chapters of this book

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previously published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine,* the *International Journal of Health Services,* and the *American Journal of Public Health* have excited considerable interest and controversy; their availability and expansion in book form should make them accessible to a wider audience interested in understanding the contradictions of our medical economy, and thus provide an important theoretical tool for health and community activists.

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ROCK, STYLE, AND IDEOLOGY

By Greg Gaut

Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll, by Simon Frith. New York: Pantheon, 1981, 294 pp., $8.95 paper.

Subculture: The Meaning of Style, by Dick Hebdige. London: Methuen, 1979, 195 pp., $6.50 paper.

The popular music known as rock 'n' roll often seems like a vast wasteland. On the radio you hear the same handful of carefully screened "hits" programmed by computers. In the newspapers, you see ads for giant arena concerts by an endless stream of mean-spirited heavy metal bands (like Judas Priest, .38 Special, and AC/DC) or by corporate soft-rock groups riding big selling records (like Fleetwood Mac, Chicago, and Asia). Or you turn on a nationally syndicated TV show like Solid Gold, where hits are sold with sex and sex is sold with hits.

Why shouldn't reasonably sane observers turn their back on this scene? Because it's not the whole story. It leaves out rock's occasional explosions of passion and grit, from its birth in 1954 to its resurgence in the late 1960s, and most recently with the punk rebellion in 1976. It misses rock's relationship to countercultures and oppositional subcultures. Those few corporations which control popular music have never completely succeeded in keeping the lid on rock 'n' roll.

Some have argued that the rock phenomenon, like punk, is a bourgeois trick to pacify youth. Others are blind to popular culture altogether. Some just want to dance to the beat. But we can't afford to ignore pop music, a bigger industry than either the movies

Greg Gaut is a Minneapolis–St. Paul activist working mostly in the anti-racist and anti-draft movements and belonging to a seven-year-old political collective.

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or pro sports. You can dance the night away and reflect thoughtfully on rock in the morning. In the United States, much is written about rock, although little of it offers useful analysis.[1] In England, where clearer class consciousness seems to generate keener analysis, Simon Frith and Dick Hebdige have been listening intently to rock and have a great deal to say about it.

Rock as Mass Culture

This is not Free Europe
Nor an Armed Force network
This is Radio Clash—
    Using audio ammunition
This is Radio Clash—
    Can we get that world to listen
This is Radio Clash—
    On pirate satellites
Orbiting your living room—
    Cashing in the Bill of Rights
This is Radio Clash—
    On pirate satellites
This is Radio Clash—
    Everybody hold on tight

—The Clash, "This is Radio Clash"
(1981 Epic single)

In *Sound Effects*,[2] rock critic/sociologist Simon Frith has written the most complete and thoughtful account of rock's production and consumption now available. Every chapter contains insights that will make even experienced rock listeners see some aspect of rock in a new way. He ultimately fails to explain why rock sometimes transcends the inherent limitations of mass-produced popular culture, although his attempt is the richest and most ambitious to date. The central strength of the book is Frith's insistence that rock's status as a mass-culture industry "must be the starting point for its celebration as well as its dismissal." The ideological power of popular music comes precisely from its popularity, because "records which don't sell, which don't become popular, don't enter mass consciousness."[3] In defending rock on these terms, he attacks those who have argued that mass culture in advanced capitalist countries is inherently corrupting. He traces this position from the "Frankfurt School" Marxists like Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse[4] to the New Left journalists Chapple and Garafalo, who wrote *Rock 'n' Roll Is Here To Pay* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977). According to this theory, rock is worthwhile only when

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spontaneously created by musicians who appear on independent labels. As soon as these same musicians sign with major labels, their music becomes a "commodity," and inherently cooptive tendencies begin to destroy the music. The assumption behind this approach is that rock is defensible only when it can be classified as "art" or as "folk music," in other words, as something other than mass culture.

This doesn't mean that Frith ignores the limitations of mass culture. A large section of the book is a comprehensive explanation of how the major labels are organized around the goal of meeting audience demand in the quest of an acceptable rate of profit. He explains what you already know if you listen to commercial radio, that it is in the music industry's interest to produce music which is "safe" enough for mass consumption. And Frith supplies the details of how the industry operates.

But he doesn't stop with explaining how rock is produced, as most writers have done. For him, how rock is consumed is equally important. He denies that the music industry creates "false" needs which it then services with record production. Instead he argues that the industry is organized to discover the real existing needs of young people for meaningful leisure and to meet that demand. And further, he shows that the manner in which the product is consumed is unpredictable and not within the control of the industry. He takes us on a tour of rock consumption, showing how rock has always been part of youth culture, yet used differently by workers as opposed to students, by men as opposed to women, by British as opposed to U.S. youth.

Drawing on all this, Frith argues that the traditional "mass culture-equals-cooptation" model is an oversimplification, because the major labels are unable to completely control either musicians or audiences. He takes the position that rock's commercial production does not *determine* its meaning. By pointing in this direction he favors a quite different strand within Marxist writing on mass culture, that of the German critic Walter Benjamin whose work was closely tied to Brecht's. Writing in the 1930s, Benjamin argued that the new technology of mass culture (he spoke of photography and film) was profoundly progressive, because it shattered the "aura" of traditional works of art, making all observers equally "expert" in interpreting a cultural product. In other words, there was now a potential for radically democratizing artistic production and consumption.[5]

The implication is that the mass media are a site of cultural struggle, where artists and audiences can fight for control of the

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means of cultural production, rather than a place of inevitable cultural cooptation.[6] Seen this way, rock's most explosive moments are "squeezed out" of the conflict between commercial manipulation on the one hand and the aspirations for authentic expression of youthful musicians and audiences on the other.

But Frith only hints that Benjamin's ideas may point the way for an analysis of rock. His reluctance to commit himself to these ideas, or any other approach, undercuts the significance of his book, for in the end he provides no real framework to use in explaining the cultural impact of rock. For example, he shies away from dealing with rock as an ideological force, as an intervention, pro or con or mixed, into the system of values, beliefs, and attitudes which support the status quo of capitalist society. In the end, his consistent ambiguity about the function of ideology seems to be rooted in an ambiguity about the meaning of class struggle in general. Although he concludes with some provocative ideas about leisure, suggesting that class struggle in the end is struggle "for fun," he doesn't project an understanding of classes being fundamentally in conflict politically because of their differing relation to the means of production. As a result, he has no firm footing upon which to ground an understanding of ideology as a real force in society.

But Frith is right when he warns rock critics to avoid the trap of analyzing rock merely as the ideological "content" of the lyrics. Something is wrong if the critic can make the same comments just by reading the lyric sheet as he or she could by listening to the record. Moreover, bands like the Sex Pistols and the Clash have a very different ideological impact than, for example, Paul McCartney's love songs.[7] All this points to the need for a rock criticism which can distinguish differing ideological impacts without losing sight of rock as essentially a *musical* experience.

Even though Frith fails in his overall project, this is still an interesting and provocative book, the best yet written on the significance of rock's production and consumption. Whatever its shortcomings, future attempts to explain rock will use this book as the starting place.

Hegemony and Subcultural Style

> Joe Strummer of the Clash on why he got a Mohawk haircut for the recent U.S. tour:
>
> "I did it to try to force some confrontation this time around. I wanted people to react to it, to ask me just what the hell I'm about. . . ."
>
> "And has it?"

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> "No, not much. Maybe people find it a little too scary, you know, too serious. Over here, you Americans never do know how to take matters of style. It's like you view it as a threat, as rebellion. In England, style signifies . . . identity. I would never equate something as simple as a radical haircut with a true act of rebellion."
>
> "Rebellion is deciding to push ahead with it all for one more day. That's the toughest test of revolt—keeping yourself alive, as well as the cause."
>
> —*Musician,* September 1982, p. 40

Another problem with Frith's analysis is that he too quickly dismisses the work of British subculture theorists. They argue that rock plays an important role as an ingredient of the style of youth subcultures which are themselves challenges to the ideological hegemony of Britain's capitalist class. One of these theorists is Dick Hebdige, whose *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* argues that the style of the punk subculture in particular can be read as working-class resistance.

Hebdige bases himself squarely on the ideas of the British sociologists who first understood youth subcultures from a class perspective. Their work, collected in the anthology *Resistance Thru Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (Hutchinson, 1976),[8] starts from the premise that each class in society has its own culture, and these cultures are ranked in a structure of domination and subordination. The culture of the dominant class and its middle-class allies tries to represent itself as *the* culture of the society, but the subordinate culture of the working class always survives, often by adapting itself to gaps and spaces left open to it. Youth subcultures have arisen, more or less visible and coherent, within these cultures. Subculture theorists were primarily interested in the Teddy Boys, Mods, and Skinheads, the spectacular British working-class subcultures of the 1950s and 1960s, and that of the 1960s hippies, which they classified as a "counterculture." This term was used to distinguish the hippies as a subset within the dominant (middle-class) culture. The counterculture can also be distinguished from subcultures because it took a more overt political form of opposition, sometimes striking against the schools, the very institutions which were supposed to prepare middle-class youth for acquiescence to the status quo.

According to *Resistance Thru Rituals,* the Teddy Boys, Mods, and Skinheads all represented attempts by working-class youth to

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deal with the same conditions of exploitation and cultural subordination that their parents face. For example, the Skinhead concern with territoriality in their neighborhoods was a reaction to the gentrification of working-class neighborhoods, and the Mod fascination with carefully groomed coat-and-tie looks was a working-class response to the myth of affluence in postwar Britain. To be sure, the subculture youth responded very differently from their parents, but both parents and youth were reacting to the same conditions.

Hebdige provides an intriguing history of subcultures, starting with the hipsters and beats, working through Teds, Mods, and Skinheads, touching on hippies and glamrock Bowieites, and finally concentrating on the Punks, whose spectacular 1976 emergence came after the publication of *Resistance Thru Rituals*. He also takes careful note of West Indian immigration to Britain after the war and the development of the Rude Boy and Reggae/Rastafarian subcultures within that population. He makes an important contribution to this history by demonstrating that the reaction of white youth to black immigration is a crucial determining factor in the development of the style of each white subculture. The delicate, charged relationship between black and white can be either openly celebrated (e.g., Mods and Punks) or repressed into hostility (e.g., Teds). In this respect, he provides enlightening comments on the positive but complex relationship of the Punks to Reggae. As Hebdige concludes, "a phantom history of race relations since the war" can be seen on the "loaded surfaces of British working-class youth cultures."

Hebdige also goes beyond his colleagues in the way he reads the subcultural style of the Punks. He begins by describing Punk style as being primarily about rupturing natural contexts. In other words, Punk style is constructed by taking unremarkable objects (pins, clothespins, toilet chains) and using them inappropriately, often offensively. Normal fashion is consciously subverted—cheap trashy fabrics and vulgar designs are highly valued, cosmetics and hair dye are worn to be anything but "natural," the perverse icons of sexual bondage are flaunted for effect. Dancing is explicitly non-expressive, robot-like, hardly geared to its traditional function of courtship. The music dispenses with all pretension of technique or the expressiveness of melody and harmony.

And there is also in Punk an explicitly working-class stance, an angry denunciation of the hopelessness of British youth in the face of unemployment, break-up of neighborhoods, etc. But Heb-

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dige denies that Punk can be read simply as working-class alienation. Unlike earlier subcultures, Punk has no permanently fixed icons (the Mod's scooter, the Skinhead's boots and braces). The working-classness of the style is abstracted, once removed from any concrete reality. More important for Punk is a sense of being uprooted, blank, an alien in one's homeland.

How then can Punk be interpreted? Starting with Roland Barthes, but quickly moving to more recent developments in semiotics,[9] Hebdige argues that Punk's creation of style out of random consumer goods is subversive because it exposes conventional style as just as artificial and "made-up" as subcultural style. He believes that this undermines our sense of the normalcy of everyday life. In a larger sense, Punk is subversive because it "signifies chaos at every level." He argues that it broke down the dependable way of grasping meaning because its whole point was to dramatize the rupture of the relationship of the sign and its concept.

This is pretty heady stuff and, as Hebdige admits, may be more complex and romantic than necessary. Somewhere in all this we lose our sense of a working-class subculture struggling against the conditions of British life, and we begin to feel that we are reading the critique of an art exhibit. Interestingly, Hebdige does compare Punk with the radical aesthetics of Dada and Surrealism. In any case, he clearly agrees with those who would characterize Punk as a positive development, as a challenge to the unity and cohesion of ruling-class hegemony, a jarring denial of the myth of consensus.

But favorable interpretations of Punk leave many questions unresolved, because the phenomenon has some serious limitations. First, there is the fact that subcultural style is only an "imaginary" solution to the problems of working-class existence. All the subcultural styles can be read as critical comments on the gap between the myth of British affluence and the reality of working-class life, but style doesn't close that gap. As *Resistance Thru Rituals* puts it, subculture members eventually must take their preordained place in the working class because there is no "subcultural career."

Some, including Simon Frith, have argued that the significance of subcultures has been exaggerated. Few young people are actually committed members of subcultures, and most who have identified with these subcultures in the past have been male.[10] Hebdige agrees that individuals participate at many different levels, but contends that all who relate to a subculture like Punk must share a common language and sensibility. And it also appears that

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Punk is more sexually integrated than all its predecessors. It should not be forgotten that it was Punk which finally opened up rock to women musicians, leading to a "new wave" of genuinely women's rock music.[11]

Then there is the problem of Punk's message. Many on the left have argued that Punk is, for all its contradictions, essentially progressive, that its angry critique of working-class existence and British and U.S. imperialism outweighs the tendencies toward sexism, racism, and fatalism.[12] On the other hand, Hebdige's assessment that Punk "signifies chaos at every level" doesn't inspire much confidence in Punk's political future. Whatever reading of Punk you adopt, the bottom line is that while it does serve to crack capital's hegemony, there is little evidence that it is the beginning of a new culture, a rallying point on the way to building a working-class counter-hegemony against the capitalist state.

Finally there is the problem of "incorporation," the ability of society to coopt subversive subcultural style, to trivialize it ideologically and sell it as just another form of exotica. For Hebdige, this "incorporation" is inevitable, and every subculture has its "moment" after which it must necessarily decline. It is now eight years since Punk hit, and although it has undoubtedly mellowed, it has not disappeared. Certainly it would be a mistake to suggest that the experience of a particular British subculture could be replicated elsewhere in Europe or in the United States. But a great deal of contemporary "hard-core" Punk and post-Punk rock retains a sharp-edged political tension and is far from being coopted for play on commercial radio. And Punk music and style continue to live in clubs, record shops, and fanzines in Europe and the United States.

Something new may be happening. The style of a working-class British subculture has been taken up by a developing youth movement, something more like the counterculture of the 1960s, but with working-class origins and roots. Both the anti-nuclear and squatters movements in West Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands have been influenced by a militant new youth movement based outside the universities whose music is Punk.[13] And in some U.S. cities, Punk bands like the Dead Kennedys of San Francisco are trying to set a political tone, struggling to overcome the nihilism of much of the Punk scene.[14] Meanwhile, political British bands like The Clash, The Gang of Four, The Au Pairs, The English Beat, and Tom Robinson continue to record, tour, and just survive, providing inspiration for further developments.

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These things are just now bringing new questions into focus. For now, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* especially when read together with the more sober *Resistance Thru Rituals,* is an excellent place to get one's bearings for understanding the subversive creativity of youth of which Punk is just the latest example.

NOTES

1. Rock in the United States doesn't lack good writers, just writers with good analysis. For example, many point to *Rolling Stone* editor Greil Marcus' *Mystery Train* (New York: Dutton, 1976, 1982) as the highpoint of U.S. rock analysis. His writing on the origins of rock is a pleasure to read, but he is stuck in old-fashioned literary analysis when it comes to understanding rock. He seeks images/archetypes of America in the music of individual musicians, approaching Elvis Presley the way a literature professor approaches Captain Ahab. But any notion of a mass-culture industry, or a mass audience with particular leisure needs, is missing. It's the "great books" approach to culture applied to rock.
2. Originally published in Britain in a more scholarly form as *Sociology of Rock* (London: Constable, 1978).
3. Frith, *Sound Effects,* pp. 54, 61.
4. Frith refers to Adorno's 1940s essay "Perennial Fashion—Jazz" in *Prisms* (London, 1967). As for Marcuse, Frith points to *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) as having the greatest influence on rock analysis in recent years.
5. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illumination* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968). See also his essay, "The Artist as Producer," *New Left Review* 62 (1970).
6. See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," *New Left Review* 64 (1970) for an exciting application of Benjamin's ideas to modern technological developments.
7. I am thinking, for example, of The Sex Pistols' single, "God Save the Queen (she ain't no human being; there is no future; and England's screaming)," which went to the top of the British charts, although banned from the radio, during the Queen's silver jubilee; or The Clash's "The Call-Up," a call for draft resistance off the *Sandinista* (1981) album, not to mention the title of the album itself.
8. This book, edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, was originally published in 1975 as an issue of the journal *Working Papers in Cultural Studies,* which comes out of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
9. Semiotics, or semiology, is the "science of signs," concerned with understanding the mechanisms by which communication occurs in gestures, fashion, advertisements, rituals, food, literature, film, etc. Hebdige starts with the French Marxist Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), the modern classic of semiotics written in 1957. But he bases his reading of Punk on contemporary semiotics, especially that of Julia Kristeva and the French journal *Tel Quel.*

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10. See Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, "Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration," in *Resistance Thru Rituals,* where the authors ask whether the invisibility of girls in Ted, Mod, and Skinhead subcultures indicates their absence or just the methodology of the male investigators.
11. Ariel Swartley, "Girls! Live! On Stage—Meet the Women Who Are Reviving Rock & Roll," *Mother Jones* (June 1982).
12. John Judis, "Punk 'n' Roll Is Here To Stay," *In These Times* (November 2, 1977); Robert Christgau, "A Cult Explodes and A Movement Is Born," *Village Voice,* (October 24, 1977); Bruce Dancis, "Safety Pins and Class Struggle: Punk Rock and the Left," *Socialist Review,* (May-June 1978); Elaine Zeskind, "Punk Rock, Music in Search of a Movement," *Urgent Tasks,* no. 5 (Summer 1979); Neil Eriksen, "Popular Culture and Revolutionary Theory: Understanding Punk Rock," *Theoretical Review* (September-October 1980).
13. George Katsiaficas, "The Extraparliamentary Left in Europe," *Monthly Review* (September 1982).
14. Jeff Goldthorpe, "The Dead Kennedys and the U.S. Punk Subculture," *Theoretical Review* (March-April 1982).

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)

We record with sorrow the death on January 1 at the age of 75 of our old and valued friend Charles Flato who was active in progressive causes since 1930s when we first got to know him. Charlie was a talented medical writer long before that branch of the journalistic profession achieved the standing and recognition it enjoys today. He was a friend and supporter of MR since its founding in 1949.

Days of the Jungle: The Testimony of a Guatemalan Guerrillero, 1972-1976, by Mario Payeras, is scheduled to be issued by MR Press as a paperback this month. After its appearance as last summer's special double issue of MR, our friend R. D. Casey, a retired seaman who spends much of his time nowadays in Mexico and Central America, wrote to us from his home in Seattle: "I just spent the last two days in my 'reading room' (the Seattle Center) with your excellent account of guerrilla life in the jungle. As you know, I have been in El Peten [the province of northern Guatemala where the book's action takes place] a few times myself. Every American leftist should have this in his/her library!! The descriptions are near perfect. When you're there, the heat lies over you like a blanket. Not a breath of air stirs in El Peten, a real man-killer!" Please add *Days of the Jungle* to your library—and persuade your friends to do likewise.

"Friends of Kathy Boudin" have asked us to inform MR readers of the availability of a pamphlet *On Trial: Kathy Boudin* which they would like to see distributed as widely as possible. By the time this issue of MR reaches readers, jury selection is scheduled to have begun (February 7), and it is estimated that the trial itself will get under way early in March and may last as long as six months. "It will be important," the Friends write, "to let the judge, prosecutor, public, and press know that Kathy is a person who is loved and respected by many different people. We hope you will be interested in coming to court [in White Plains] at least once during the trial. Please call for information about when to attend (there is no court on Fridays) and how to get there. We hope you will also be in touch about other ways to help." For further information and copies of the pamphlet, write or phone Friends of Kathy Boudin, 163 Joralemon St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 (212-624-5921).

The Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex in England is offering a course in the first term of the 1984-85 academic year (September 17 to December 14) which may be of special interest to some MR readers. Entitled "Women, Men and Development," it is based on the premise that gender plays a key role in determining the ways men and women participate in economic, social, and political activities, and aims to give participants an idea of some of the crucial issues relative to improving women's welfare and general situation in society as well as to ensuring that gender equality is a key goal of social transformation. Activists as well as teachers and researchers in development studies are invited to apply. Write to Jill McCabe, the Course Secretary, at IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, England.

Professor Seymour Melman of Columbia University, author of well-known works on the economic aspects of U.S. militarism and a leader of SANE, asks us to inform readers that qualified scholars and researchers working on aspects of the U.S. military economy can now consult the complete research files of six of his books in this field (dating from the period 1958-1974). For each book research materials are organized in folders that match the published chapters, with further relevant materials included. There is also an unpublished ms. entitled "The Military Economy—A Collection of Article in *The New York Times* from the Civil War to 1981." These materials are available on request to Kenneth A. Lohf, Librarian for Rare Books and Manuscripts, Room 801, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027 (212-280-2231).

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